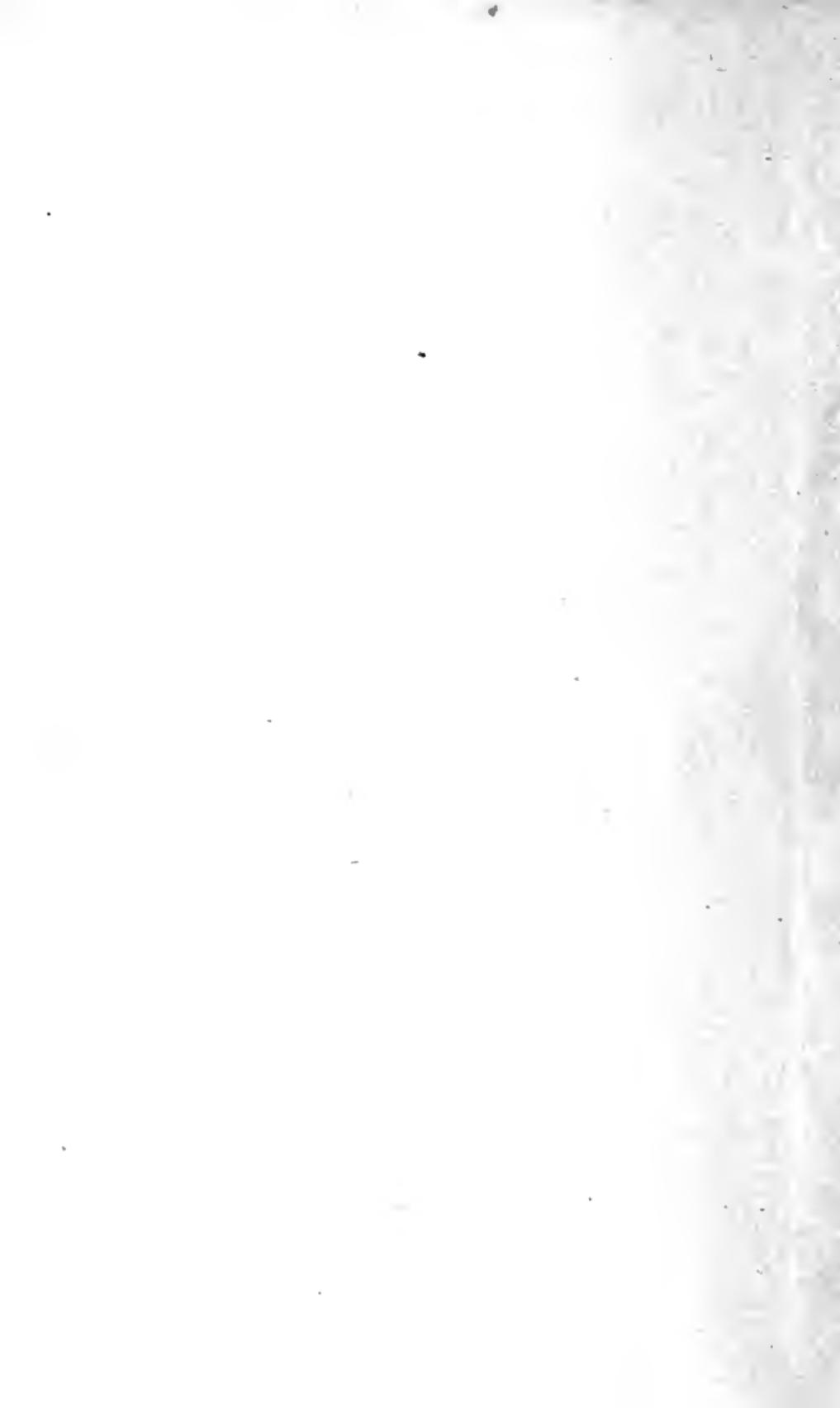


NURSERY  
ETHICS

FLORENCE HULL  
WINTERBURN







# NURSERY ETHICS

BY

FLORENCE HULL WINTERBURN

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TO  
**My Father.**



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## PREFACE.

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IT is about six years ago now since the papers forming the nucleus of this little book were written. Much of the work was done with two little faces gazing wonderingly at me from either side of my desk, and whatever value it has is owing as much to the inspiration drawn from that living child presence as from the long years of study and observation which preceded the effort whose results are now offered to the thoughtful public.

The principle underlying every line of this book is that of justice to children. The idea that there should be a code of laws for the nursery as there is for communities may be a novel one to persons accustomed to entire unrestraint in their control of their children. If arbitrary or capricious methods were always attended

with happy results, and if by the exercise of instinct only parents were able to rear their children with perfect satisfaction, then they would be justified in declining to spend time reflecting upon their duties or studying into the philosophy of parenthood.

But while there is scarcely one among us who, upon looking backward, cannot refer to some error in his own early training certain misadventures of his later life, there would seem to be reason why we should try to find out the perfect method, if there is one, and hold that up to ourselves as our working ideal.

The endeavor to find this ideal and to present it intelligibly to the many conscientious, earnest parents who wish to do their best for their children without quite seeing the way clear before them, has been my guiding motive through all my work for the past half dozen years. As editor of the magazine "**CHILDHOOD**" and as a member of several parents' societies I have been brought into personal contact with many of those it is my desire to reach in this book. And if

through this they should receive an answer to questions that have perplexed them ; if their way should be made a little easier, and the path of childhood brighter and happier, I shall be thankful and content.

NEW YORK, *Aug. 30, 1895.*



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# NURSERY ETHICS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE RIGHT ATTITUDE OF PARENTS.

“The ideal in education would be, to allow each child scope for its own particular bent, while at the same time setting our example before him.”—PEREZ.

IT is a most difficult and delicate matter to lay down rules for domestic government, because it involves admonitions to the parents concerning their own conduct; and while people acknowledge, reluctantly, that example is a more potent force than precept in training the young, they can scarcely be brought to admit that faultiness in themselves unfits them for the position of disciplinarians. The current idea of the way to bring up a child is to “tell him what he must do

(mark the emphasis *must*) and enforce obedience." The question seems to be not so much the nature of the rule as that there is a rule, a regimen, the prescribing and carrying out of which vindicates the dignity of the parent and shows him up to the world as an admirable drill-sergeant. Although modern usage has softened and modified the practice that obtained in "the good old time" of keeping children in a state of manifest subjection, still, the change is one of necessity rather than resolution, the tendency of modern life setting so strongly toward individual liberty that the iron-clad regulations that used to prevail everywhere have everywhere insensibly relaxed. The old ideal still exists, however. We see that it holds its authority even with the most gentle parents in such utterances as these: "In my day children were seen and not heard." "I would not have *dared* speak that way to my mother." "Truly, things have come to a pretty pass when mites like you are to be asked what you like!" It seems that while they find it impossible to continue in their own families the

measures that repressed their childhood, they believe it right to be stern if they could and reproach themselves for weakness when they are indulgent. In face of this fact that kindness is a sort of surreptitious action that must be hid from Solomon, one cannot wonder that a modern philosopher closes some remarks upon this subject with the dry conclusion : "The general practice of any ideal system of discipline is hopeless. Parents are not good enough."

But I think that although half the fault may lie in that direction, at least half lies in the want of knowledge. Parents are not wise enough. Egotism keeps them ignorant. For, while every one will readily confess that without special training he could not manage a steam-engine or take charge of a parish where the grave responsibility would fall upon him of advising men as to the welfare of their souls, the same people would unhesitatingly assume the charge of a child. It is a natural function. But it is no more natural than marriage, and the disastrous effects of trusting altogether to nature

and disregarding reason here, is constantly made manifest. When one reflects what exquisite tact is required by two grown people living together in the married relation to get along in harmony, even when they possess an ordinary amount of self-control and considerable knowledge of human nature, it becomes evident that it is even more difficult for an adult to deal justly with a child whose own point of view is consistently ignored, and whose only chance of being understood and sympathized with lies in the accuracy and vividness of those recollections of his own childhood which a parent occasionally brings to bear in his dealings with his children. And even these recollections may not be at all pertinent to the case; for the child may not be like either parent in disposition or temperament, and so, what they would prefer for themselves may be inherently distasteful to the child. Knowing that our power of sympathizing with another is limited by our experience, since sympathy involves either the having passed through, or possessing capacity to pass through

the state exhibited by him to us, we should be very cautious of assuming that we understand our children, and have the right to disregard their preferences as childish whims. Even if they are whimsical that is a perfectly logical consequence of their stage of mental development. Reason has its infancy, but emotions seem to be born full-grown. Children are emotional, and so often apparently eccentric, but while allowances are made for the eccentricities of an adult, it is considered most naughty for a child to be peculiar. Yet, even if nature had disposed them to be ideally reasonable, the training they are commonly subjected to would unsettle their wits.

The prevailing fear with many conscientious parents is that they shall be too mild; that their policy shall not be repressive enough; and as no humane person can consistently maintain an attitude of harshness throughout, they waver between lenient impulses and scruples tending toward severity, so that their children are brought up as on a border-land between conflicting powers, alternately capt-

ured and released, until they come to have a philosophical contempt for authority of any sort.

Small blame to them. When the impulse of the moment makes the law, and nothing is stable, when they see their parents change like the weather-cocks, it is quite natural, and, in fact, only doing justice to the situation, for them to count upon the variability of the parental mind, and calculate upon having their own way. Children, being so susceptible, are quickly made aware of every change of mood in their elders, and when they are surrounded by impulsive people, who are swayed in their treatment of them by the feeling of the moment, they learn to take advantage of the favorable period, and by warily humoring the whims of those in authority, get from favor what they could not hope from justice. Nature gives her small creatures cunning, to pit them against the destructive force of her monsters, so we should rather inquire into the reason of the development of cunning in children, when they display it, than blame them for possessing what may be their sole

weapon of defense against hard circumstances.

I have heard people cry out bitterly at being outwitted by their own children. A boy, subject to irregular government, rushes into the parlor where his mother is entertaining company, and begs loudly for the doughnuts cook is frying. And in the majority of instances his demand is granted, even if it would be denied were no one present. Let the mother ask herself *why*. Sometimes to prevent an exhibition of temper from the child which would betray the fact that she was not able to restrain him; and sometimes, in the foolish fear lest the visitor should think her harsh or *mean*. There really are mothers of this sort, and in refined circles. Some who, in an affected display of lavishness, will give their children expensive bon-bons that others may see they can afford to do so; or will permit the wearing of best clothes upon an ordinary occasion lest the person who is standing by should suppose they are obliged to be careful. Yet, after company has gone, and the "company manners" which marks

the moral as well as the social parvenue, are relaxed, there is an avalanche of blame for "that child who always takes advantage of me when visitors are present."

Well, the child knows her for a moral coward, one whose "no" means that she does not want to, and whose "yes" means that she is obliged to. Courtiers know that a weak monarch is the worst of tyrants, because one can never be sure of him, and they are subtle and deft in their manipulations of his moods, their place depending upon their adroitness. So the child who loves doughnuts to excess, and believes, arguing from his general knowledge of her character, that his mother refuses this gratification as she does others, merely for her convenience, is by no means criminal in pursuing his wishes when the conditions are obviously upon his side. Her indecision and vanity are the means of educating him in diplomacy. For, naturally, children are straightforward and would prefer to go frankly to the point if it was safe to do so. And usually they are too straightforward for their own advantage.

Are they not perpetually rebuked for "sauciness" when they blurt out some opinion that may have more than a germ of truth in it, but would create a domestic revolution if attended to? It is a very difficult thing for a parent who is even a little unworthy, to keep the respect of his children. They see other parents, they hear the talk of other children about their fathers and mothers, and their pride and affection are both wounded when they are made to feel that their own are less gentle, less companionable, less lovely altogether than those of their friends. And another way in which their faculty of comparing and criticising is educated is through the books they read. In the nice little Sunday-school books we give them, to teach them what model children are like, they learn something about pattern parents: self-denying mothers who smilingly play with their little boys when they would rather go visiting or sew lace in their gowns; and generous fathers who don't buy cigars and liquors with their money, but say, when a birthday comes: "Here, Tom, here is the bicycle

you have been dying for ; take it and be happy ! ”

Do you suppose that their eyes do not water sometimes, and their little hearts grow heavy as they contrast the parental character in story-books with the conduct they have daily experience of ? They find out even where the error lies in their own training. A scolding mother, fond but high-tempered, was once electrified by her twelve-year-old daughter telling her gravely that she was not “ judicious.” The truth was too much a home-thrust, and nothing was to be done but to silence the girl with a charge of impertinence. Yet that child felt within her own mind all the weight of the misfortune of her position. She knew herself to be conscientious and desirous to have absolute confidence in her mother, yet she was, unhappily for herself, too logical not to trace out the inconsistencies and selfishness that were all too apparent. The little, helpless *Cassandras*, that sit among us as witnesses and would utter true sayings if they dared—how little their instincts are attended to !

One of the most importunate needs of a child is for *invariability* in treatment. It is indeed difficult for an adult to keep in mind what he very well knows, that the ignorance of a new-born infant is absolute, that it has no preference in favor of either good or bad conduct, and that its moral nature will be developed, as will its intellectual nature, entirely through association. How very important it is, then, that this dawning intelligence should not be confused by inconsistent representations—that the partial statements made to it from day to day should “hang together,” so that one may naturally correlate itself with another, thus establishing a chain of facts capable of being embraced under a general law. Sometimes the moral balance of a child may depend upon its parents’ power of consistency; and the want of it is always disturbing and sure to create confusion and distrust. People are often very rash in their generalizations with children, not reflecting that as their utterances are made oracularly they will sink deep into young minds and be given wide application. A child is told,

for instance, that because his mother is older and more experienced than he she knows that a certain kind of conduct is wrong. Perhaps the same day his father, or his grandmother, contradicts this, and affirms that it is harmless. They are equally old and experienced, more so. The doctors disagree, and the young pupil turns critic. His mother has based her affirmation upon untenable grounds, and it falls through. She essayed to seem infallible and is justly found out. Suppose, instead of asserting positively that which she had only reason for believing true, she had, recollecting that all knowledge is relative, expressed a qualified opinion, or given advice with the avowal that her affection and interest made her solicitous that the child should do thus and so. There are no weak points in this armor. A child never seeks to pick flaws in love. He will cling loyally to it, even if it cannot give a conclusive answer to all his questions. And true love, always unselfish, finds it possible to be consistent, because being simple and frank it makes no pre-

tenses, and being without egotism, it is not anxious to appear perfect, and is saved from the consequence of becoming absurd.

But, despite all the talk of, and all the belief in, parental affection, the fact is that a perfectly unselfish parental love is very rare. It had need exist, for the relations existing between parents and child demand the exercise upon the part of the stronger of extraordinary self-restraint so that they may be enabled to think constantly of the feelings of those who are subject to them, and prevented from yielding to the temptation that besets every one who is invested with authority : the tendency to abuse it.

When one thinks of the immense power residing in the parents, and perceives how easily a whim or caprice may mar or wreck the career of the individual under their charge, one needs great confidence in the natural right instinct of humanity and the most profound trust in the self-sacrificing love of the parental heart to be able to believe that this relation can be carried out with any approach to ideal perfection.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE NATURAL LIMITATIONS OF AUTHORITY.

“A careful study of general moral laws will reveal the fact that hitherto in the world too much relative stress has been laid upon the duties of children to parents, while too little attention has been given to the duties of parents to their children ; this for the reason that books upon duty have been written by parents and the childrens’ side of the question has been quite ignored.”—JOHONNOT.

POWER has ordinarily no other reason for being than the inclination of the person possessing it to continue in its possession. The habit of controlling a thing induces the belief that it belongs to one, and even a right gained originally by usurpation may finally come to be held by conscientious conviction. This is true in great national affairs, and true in the affairs of every-day life. Does not our great English satirist, Dickens, whose

graphic pictures reveal far-reaching meanings to the student of human nature, tell us how Miss Betsy Trotwood had firmly persuaded herself that she owned the field under her window, and was perfectly justified in waging war upon trespassing donkeys?

How did the excessive power formerly possessed by parents over their children grow up? It is something peculiar to human beings, and unknown to the lower species, where the relation maintained is simply protective on the part of the parents. There is no doubt that it is a usurpation, as all excessive power of one person over another is. It comes down from the terrible days when "might made right," and has in a great measure maintained its existence, because man has not yet made such a mental advance as enables him to feel that acute sympathy with his children that is necessary before he can understand their feelings in the situation in which he has placed them. Sympathy is the accompaniment of civilization, and the voluntary resignation of power is only possible from those persons

whose organizations are so sensitive that they themselves suffer from inflicting pain upon others. This is an attribute of the highest moral nature, and should be cultivated, not resisted, as some parents resist it, from a stern sense of duty. Many of our ideas of duty are still barbaric. In our hearts we still sacrifice to Moloch. There are times when we are conscious of this and wish that we were more enlightened. It is possible to become so ; not by studying books upon ethics which persistently represent one side, but by cultivating both our sympathy and our perception ; by studying children and striving to understand them, for only through understanding their needs and their tendencies shall we be able to arrive at any just ideas of the government it is our duty to exercise over them.

Theorizing is, in questions of discipline, of very little value. There are a few general principles that are firm ground on which to build a superstructure of family government that must be varied according to the special needs of each family.

First and foremost, a parent must ask himself what is the extent and what the purpose of his natural authority over his child. Janet, in his "Elements of Morals," states it absolutely: "Parental authority has no other origin than the actual interest of the children, and the mission of the parent is to represent it."

What a marvelous power of self-abnegation is demanded of a parent who is thus called upon to represent to himself as judge and legislator, the interests of another individual often seemingly at variance with his own. Is it easy for him to adjust all affairs with an eye to their proper relations and degrees of importance; to balance against his own comfort his child's enlightenment, or the child's chances of innocent enjoyment against his own conveniences, or the child's ultimate and permanent welfare against his own tastes and preferences? There is no idea more settled than that the world belongs to adults. Children are admitted on good behavior. They may force their way in if nature has gifted them rarely with beauty or brains, as in that case the weight

of abstract power is pitted against physical force. But their existence is kindly tolerated. They are looked upon as adjuncts—sometimes as necessary evils incidental to marriage, and to be endured, as mosquitoes are in summer. It seldom enters the head, even of a fond and indulgent parent, that there is an inevitable obligation upon him to be kind. His kindness is a concession, and he secretly takes a certain credit to himself for exercising it. No one would hold him to account if he were otherwise. Frequently a child is told to "get out of the way," as if his presence littered up the world! Large affairs must go on; there are factories to be run, railroads to be built, social duties to be attended to, and all the concerns bearing upon bodily comfort necessarily receive the first attention. So far as regards the animal needs of a child he is usually not neglected. He is fed, clothed, and taken out of doors to get the air. In fact he is viewed as a young animal—with the one exception that he is not allowed liberty. The clothes he wears are loaned him by his parents, who exact

that this young animal, with the instinct to frolic and be careless, shall have the prudence of a-being in a high state of civilization. Perhaps there is a latent possibility within him to become such a being. But the conditions are not favorable. There is a restriction against his being either the animal he is called or the highly developed creature he is expected to act like. He is condemned to be a mongrel. Sitting in their little carriages, or pattering along beside nurses either taciturn or engaged in congenial chat with friends, these children of our modern families have scarcely more freedom in reality than the sons of the ancient Egyptian kings who walked behind their father carrying his fans. With the rarest exceptions they live a silent life, shut up like sleeping beauties behind their hedge of ignorance and wonder which no one attempts to penetrate to effect their release. Their education, instead of being a development of what is internal and individual to themselves is external, a teaching of behavior and manners. So a child behaves well who inquires what he thinks

and believes? He often grows up with the most singular views of morality, and which would surely have been corrected if any one had taken the trouble to draw out his ideas. If the right relations existed between parents and their child, he would, instead of being an alien, be an indispensable member of their little community, his interests and theirs harmonizing through the existence of mutual understanding and sympathy. It is possible to bring a child up to our level, socially and morally, if ceasing from the first to look upon him as a being of inferior or diverse nature, we regard him rather as undeveloped man, with propensities as tenacious and exacting as our own, capable of being influenced, but not of changing their character.

We realize very little of the intensity and force of our children's tastes and desires, because we are seldom in a sufficiently disinterested condition to take account of them. They fall in outwardly with our ways and pass a great part of their lives in subjection to our opinions. This is, in a measure, inevitable. But it

surely is enough, that in matters of conscientious conviction we must impose the law of our own being upon our offspring. Even our right to do this is very restricted. Every human being has certain needs of his nature to which there is a corresponding agency in the physical or mental sphere ; to interfere with this natural harmony, is to deprive him of a part of his life. Yet, to some degree, this interference is bound to take place. We have a thousand excuses for inducing others to do as we do, not because it is the only right course, but because it saves us the trouble of weighing the right and wrong of some other course. In affairs of real importance, it is sometimes essential to sacrifice the happiness of one member to that of the others, and of securing uniformity of action at the cost of pain and inconvenience. But it is a grave responsibility thus to assume charge of the destiny of another, and it cannot but be looked upon as a most unpleasant necessity, never to be sought. So far as possible, children should be left at liberty to develop their own peculiar-

ties. They may seem strange to us and different from what we should have preferred in our offspring, but we, who are apt to look upon ourselves as the primary authors of their being, are but a single pair in the long line of parents. So far as inheritance is concerned, our child may belong far more to some great grandfather, many times removed, than he belongs to us, and an inherent necessity rests upon him to grow into the likeness of his real, near progenitor. It is our duty to guide and instruct, but rather by example than through argument. For the child will gladly adopt from us those ideas and ways that he has an affinity for, and when he shows refractoriness it is not infrequently either because we have been awkward or brutal in attempting to force our ways upon him, and so have aroused his antagonism; or else, because conformity is simply, from his diverse nature, impossible to him.

We should respect individuality in our children as a mark of their value. A passive, phlegmatic disposition is not the evidence of superior virtue that it is often

considered. Neither do these people do the work of the world. A horse-trainer does not grudge the pains he bestows upon a spirited animal, and is not so unreasonable as to resent the restlessness of a creature with sensitive nerves. But parents are given to suppressing all unpleasant ebullitions of character, without inquiring into the cause of them. May it be hoped that this severity proceeds from thoughtlessness. What is needed is more serious reflection upon the duty parents owe to their children, to aid them in the development of their own essential individuality. It is not a duty easy of performance, for self-restraint must precede the exercise of justice. A man must govern his temper and subdue his selfish impulses before he can ever perceive that another person has rights he is bound to respect; particularly if the said party is under his authority and incapable of making any resistance. Perhaps the very hardest thing in the world is to avoid being a tyrant when the temptation is offered. The only safeguard is to entirely dispossess the mind of the fallacy

that power in itself, is a divine right. The power of parents over children is an incident of the situation, not the reason of it. It is essential to recollect that nature has established relations with a view to the benefit of the children, and only secondarily to our own.

As the child can set up no standard and interpose no limitations to the exercise of authority, the first duty of the parent is to set up a strict standard for himself, founded on the natural law of equity, admirably laid down by Janet. The difficulty is not in setting up the standard but in conforming to it. Far rather would we show others their duty than subscribe to the regulation ourselves! It would be well if every one would remind himself what Cyrus, one of the wisest rulers that ever controlled a great nation, said to his counsellors, that "no one had any business with government who was not himself better than the governed."

A common observation excusing autocratic measures with the young is that "children do not know what is good for them."

True; but do their parents always know what is good for them—do they make an impartial study of every question and decide always for the welfare of the governed? Are they totally disinterested in their conclusions? Unless they possess this patience and foresight, as well as generosity, they are not qualified for the responsible position they hold. Some one has rightly remarked that we expect more perfection of our children than we are capable of ourselves. I think that we often feel it a point of duty to enjoin upon others ideals we have ourselves failed to attain. But it is a dangerous habit, both because there is a tendency in human nature to imagine that it has itself more than half-performed duties it has advocated, and because to make requirements too stern and strict for performance engenders hopelessness in the unfortunate one so admonished.

The endeavor, then, of a parent should be, first, to make stern demands of himself; to be fair-minded, sympathetic, and patient. Next, having established such proper sentiments in his own mind toward

his child, to bring about the correct relation of the child toward himself. If success has followed the attempt in the first instance, the second will be far easier than it appears at the instant of approaching the subject. In family government the difficulty far more often lies with us than with our children. Impulse is the common guide where the nicest reasoning and the most accurate judgment are really required. Mere spontaneous affection is not to be relied upon, for, as we have seen, natural fondness is a variable quantity and subject to disturbances of temper. Of all things a parent should have perfect control of his temper, and avoid all disposition to hasty and one-sided conclusions. The old Egyptian proverb wisely cautions: "Let bitterness not enter into the heart of a mother."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE SYMPATHETIC RELATION.

“Those who are compelled by us hate us as if de-spoiled of something, while those who are persuaded by us, love us as if they had received a favor.”

—XENOPHON'S *Anabasis*.

STANDING toward his child in the position of a special Providence, the guide of his ignorance, the guardian of his helplessness, the parent has a right to demand obedience to the seemingly unbounded but really restricted authority with which he is, through the nature of their relations, invested. It is his duty to exercise this solely with a view to the welfare of his charge. He should be as honest in taking care of the young personality entrusted to his care as he would be in managing funds belonging to his bank. Character is far more precious than lucre, and more easily injured. When a

parent has been able to so far divest himself of his egotism as to recognize that children are to be viewed from the first as belonging to themselves, and not as property, he will understand that obedience is not a natural attribute. Children have no spontaneous instinct for it. They come into the world not knowing what it is any more than how to practice it. Herein one perceives the desirability of not making the first lessons unduly harsh and severe. Upon calm and deliberate reflection is there not something monstrous in beginning a child's education by the use of brute force? The one certain factor to be depended upon in making life conform to a standard is the power of habit, and over this efficient method we possess entire control. The child is already, through his helplessness, subject to us ; we may deprive him at will of comfort and the satisfaction of his instincts. There is no doubt that this will be done inadvertently, through not understanding him. There are many involuntary punishments inflicted upon these dumb creatures which it might appall one to know. Is it, then,

necessary to hammer in the spike his sensitive flesh already feels, and impress, by the employment of bodily torments, the lesson apparent on the very face of it, that we are master and that he must submit? A parent may, by merely remaining inattentive to insubordination in infants, make them realize the futility of resisting. He may become to them a fate, something unchangeable. There is no reason why he should aim to appear a monster. Restraints are repugnant to all human beings, and those which are inevitable should be imposed gradually and gently. There ought to be a certain sympathy with the baffled, disappointed feeling that possesses even the youngest being when prevented from carrying out an impulse. "Temper," observes Dr. McCosh, "springs fundamentally from disappointed appetences." The young creature is stirred by impulses and instinct speaks in the demands he makes. For the nature of these demands he is not responsible; heredity is. We are here to educate him through his instincts, not to try to crush them. There is a strange

way of talking which even kindly disposed people sometimes fall into, as if the child was, from the outset, "bound to have his own way;" he "must be taught that other people have rights as well as he;" brought up to "mind upon the instant," blindly, automatically, as if he was a machine possessing an innate bias toward a particular motion not in harmony with the motion of his guardians, and thereby provoking in them a desire to propel him in their own direction, or to break the machinery.

But a thoughtful person will scarcely accredit a new-born infant with this willful premeditated antagonism. His cries are protests against ill-usage; his sin is that he wants to be comfortable! He wants it very much indeed; more than he wants to please his guardians. How should he know anything about pleasing? And here, at this instant, is the time to ask the question: What sentiment do we wish to inspire in this young mind toward ourselves, love, or fear? Few parents would hesitate when the question is thus directly put, to declare in favor of love. But they

must be obeyed. Let us then recognize that there are two sorts of obedience: deference, or the desire to please, and servility, or fear of pain. And they are not interchangeable. Where the last has been established it is very difficult for the first to be substituted. There is something so awe-inspiring in the idea of human individuality, the expression of some unique part of the universal spirit of life, that one should be deeply touched when there is a free surrender of any portion of this individuality to us. There is something mysteriously beautiful in such a yielding. Should so lovely a thing be lightly sacrificed to harsh egotism? The great duty we should rather enjoin upon ourselves is to make obedience pleasurable, to prevent the feeling of humiliation and pain that is the essential accompaniment of an enforced yielding, and cultivate, at any trouble, the grace of an affectionate docility, which is very far removed from the "absolute obedience" usually commended.

There are many respects in which our civilization is so unnatural and so difficult

that a child's life is from the beginning a constant series of checks. Many instinctive desires that could be gratified under other circumstances must be thwarted because conditions forbid. But let us be as gentle as we can in initiating this young creature into worldly usages. At first only such impulses as tend to his own injury should be thwarted, that the check may stand out in sharp contrast with his usual freedom of movement, and also that there may grow up in his mind an idea that a command is not an arbitrary exertion on the part of the stronger, but a kindly ordinance, having in view his own welfare. "Issue as few edicts as possible" is a good rule for a parent to follow. All the most cautious and learned guardians of youth from Socrates down to Rollin, advocate environing a child with silent care, keeping him out of the way of temptation, and aiming to preserve in him innocence and purity of mind as long as it is in our power to so shield him.

In that remarkable Edgeworth family where the children of one father by three different mothers dwelt together in harmony,

and where, according to the daughter's record, "not one tear was shed a month," there was carried out systematically the government by love. The children felt themselves free, because the government was protective, and not aggressive. They were guided, but never interfered with. From their earliest years they were taught the reason why certain requirements were necessary. If it was requisite for them to preserve certain boundaries in their play-ground, it was solely that the rights of others might not be infringed upon. Children appreciate the principle of "fair play," and if the aim of our training is, as it should be, the development in them of the power of self-control, they cannot be too early imbued with the sentiment of justice. It may almost be asserted that this feeling is innate with children springing from a race of self-governing men. This very quality is what makes them so difficult to deal with after arbitrary methods. It is in their blood to perceive things for themselves and to reason. But at the same time it cannot be expected of them that they should them-

selves always be reasonable. They are more amenable to logic than the infant Chinaman would be, or the young Russian or the young Italian, who are respectively inclined to be stolid, submissive, and emotional. But reason exists only in the germ, and it must be carefully developed. Rousseau asserts that "reasoning too early checks a child's physical growth," but that is one of the instances where the great philosopher is empirical without due regard to facts. Cyrus, one of the most robust of boys, was taught to reason from a very early age, and in the "schools of justice" in Persia, where the greatest regard was paid to the physical development of youth, the government was conducted entirely upon the plan of making the boys themselves the judges of conduct. That celebrated system has been followed in part by some modern educators, and with great success. Pestalozzi improved upon it in aiming to inspire in his pupils a personal attachment both to himself and to each other, so that they should feel a pleasure in witnessing the enjoyment of another, to which their own acts had

contributed. In view of his wonderful self-abnegation the great affection his pupils entertained for him was not extraordinary. All know what privations he endured; how he shared the poverty and discomforts of his "children" and lived with them day by day in such intimate relations that his personal existence, all that egotism which separates a man from a child and which he is usually unable to conquer, was lost in the great-hearted love which he poured out upon these little waifs of humanity.

It is not worth while merely to tell a child that we mean well toward him and work for his happiness. He must feel the truth of the assertion—must see it borne out in the conditions of his life. It is necessary to recollect that to children one grain of the present is worth a mountain of the future; lacking forethought and prevision, living in their sensations, eternity is comprised with them in the pleasure or pain of the moment. That far-away "sometime" of which we talk so sagely conveys no definite impression, and they are not able to appre-

ciate the kind of care that requires of them perpetual sacrifices that good may come of it "one day." That this care is necessary is unquestionable, so, too, is the admission readily made that we must exercise for them the prudence that exacts a deferring of gratification that the measure of it may be greater. But how long it has taken the human race to develop the prudential motive as a law of conduct! How comparatively few fully accept it now! It is an unpleasant doctrine at times to all, and one that only education and experience reconcile one to adopting. So it cannot be expected that children will view it with anything but dismay. Grateful for a care of which they realize nothing of the meaning, and suffer, therefore, without compensation all the discomforts! It is asking too much. A child is not grateful for the ordinary comforts of life; food, clothes, and shelter are part of his natural environment and excite no comment. Only in those pitiful cases where such absolute necessities are lacking and hardship has prematurely educated the judgment, are

little ones likely to understand that these things are not supplied save at the cost of real exertion on the part of guardians. We are grateful only for the unexpected, and especially for the superfluous ; that which is not essential to bare existence, but is a brightener and beautifier of our lives. How perfectly natural, therefore, that children should be indifferent toward our efforts to supply them with an equipment that aids their success in after life ; that they shrink from the difficulties of learning and are impatient under deprivations of present freedom and enjoyment which they understand, for the sake of some distant benefit which they do not understand.

But they are by nature keenly appreciative of kindness, of that extra effort which consists in ministering to their need for pleasure. When not spoiled they have a delightful capacity for being pleased with simple things ; the sense that their friends have tried to indulge them and supply what is wanted is most likely to evoke gratitude. But a careless and condescending favor does not pro-

duce this effect any more than it would produce it upon ourselves. The whole beauty and grace of an indulgence, as of a gift, consists in the appropriateness, which shows a thoughtful study of their disposition and tastes. I cannot agree with those persons who consistently disregard a child's natural preferences and aversions. To do so indicates a great lack of knowledge of the laws of human development. A predisposition to some particular article of food, or some special form of recreation, frequently has its origin in an organic need. It may, of course, be merely an inherited whim, but no one has a right to so decide without first attempting to acquaint himself with his child's disposition, giving time enough to determine as far as possible whether the trait in question is a superficial characteristic, or whether it has its spring deep in those hereditary transmissions which it is useless and hurtful to try to dominate. Even some habitual acts that have the appearance of willfulness may often be traced to a physical defect of which the individual is himself uncon-

scious. Idiosyncracies are always unpleasant, but they are not always criminal. Many stories are told of inherited peculiarities against which the whole force of early education has battered without the slightest result. Ribot mentions a girl whose loquacity nearly distracted her associates, but who only reproduced her father in this respect. And I heard recently of a woman who is and has always been totally unable to recognize by their countenances even her nearest relatives, when she meets them away from home. Yet she underwent much discipline in childhood for what seemed persistent rudeness. There are children whose eyes are bright yet who cannot see distinctly, whose ears do not catch certain sounds easily, while readily hearing others; in whom certain muscles are weak, certain nerves diseased from birth, but these facts are usually only discovered after the victims have suffered repeated corrections and perhaps endured years of miscomprehension.

Some one remarks, "Penetrate the bottom of their hearts before correcting

them." And it ought to be added: Penetrate their natures; inquire into the reason of what seems odd and unmanageable. Heredity is often to blame instead of the child. We must first of all things give ourselves time to study and investigate him, for if we do not discover the key to unlock the door of his confidence he will ever remain an inscrutable mystery. It ought to be realized that children seldom consciously reveal themselves. Seemingly spontaneous and transparent, there are yet reserves that ordinary intercourse does not overcome. This is in large measure due to the fact that their vocabulary is almost wholly objective. Their inner life is like a pictorial representation, often dazzling to their own minds. And their feeble attempts at self-explanation are so often laughed at that they soon learn that this realm of fancy and feeling is uninteresting to their grown-up acquaintances. Whoever has power to discern something of what is going on behind all their physical activity can establish delightful sympathetic relations with the little creatures who love to

be friendly if they are encouraged by feeling that they give pleasure to their elders by their companionship. To win a child's affection and confidence is not easy, because it requires not only real virtue but sympathetic insight. A certain animal magnetism attracts them too. Everything that is picturesque or possessed of great vitality is fascinating at the sensuous period of life, and virtue ought to make itself beautiful and charming to win their adherence. But their taste is not classical, and they care neither for perfection of form or coloring, if the one essential quality is present—sympathy. Our whole power of gaining their affection lies in that. They will fondly cherish what is homely if it is good, that is—good to them. Feeling with them is not so much primary as responsive. We must put forth something of the kind we wish to evoke in order to exert an influence. An infant responds in a remarkably short time to the tenderness lavished upon it, and his budding affection should be carefully cherished, for from this is to be developed trustfulness and docility.

It is a mission for which the parents would do well to prepare themselves by the practice of a rigid self-control, and the cultivation of a patience and tact far beyond what they have ever needed in any other relation in life.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DEMAND OBEDIENCE TO CIRCUMSTANCES, NOT TO PERSONAL FORCE.

“The child has a keen feeling, a very clear apprehension, and rarely fails to distinguish whether what the father or teacher says is arbitrary or personal, or whether it is expressed by him as a general law and a necessity.”—FRÖBEL’S *Education of Man*.

THE first idea which we should seek to establish in the child’s mind, then, is the belief that his parents are his sympathetic, considerate *friends* not, as has been remarked by one writer:—“friend-enemies.” Rousseau says, “The child ought to love his mother before he knows that it is his duty to do so.” If what ought to be spontaneous and natural waits to become a matter of conscience, it is to be feared that the filial affection will be of a most perfunctory sort. And there is much of it in the world. Children are naturally

loyal, and tenacious of family ties. Even when most affronted they rarely complain to outsiders of treatment received at home, and this not always so much from fear as from a sense of dignity ; they comprehend without reasoning about it that anything that reflects upon their family hurts themselves. But if we could be made aware how much of this faithfulness comes from mere consanguinity and how alloyed it often is with doubt and mistrust, we should be less complacent in our acceptance of the view that our children love us. The warm and genuine affection of a child is a dear flattery. What word of compliment or regard can ever awaken in our hearts the exquisite satisfaction evoked by the honest, voluntary exclamation of a tiny being who throws himself into our arms saying, "Good mother, dear mother!" And who can help being humbled at a tribute only half deserved, or avoid recollecting that it comes far less often than it would if she were truer to her ideals and a more perfect mother to her child !

Good government depends upon getting a child to so love and trust his parents

that the pleasing them shall of itself give him pleasure. There is, from the necessity of the case, he being impulsive and heedless, and they being prudent and judicious, a certain amount of force essential. But it should be latent, not wantonly exhibited ; felt, rather than seen. Unkind feelings must arise if there is anything that looks like caprice or harshness upon the part of the guardians. Their authority should appear to be, in a way, involuntary, as if they were the medium for transmission of force, rather than the originators of it. It is natural and inevitable that hostility should be excited towards what opposes the carrying out of our desires, so there should, in all necessary opposition, be as little exhibition of personality as possible. A sympathetic parent really feels the grief and irritation of his child, and he should not, from a false idea that it is dignified to remain unmoved, be too reticent and laconic. If he has succeeded in creating the impression that he really is a considerate friend, capable of entering into the feelings of his child, the young creature falls into the habit of deference

towards his elder, just as a mature mind comes to submit to the mysterious decrees of a Providence believed to be benevolent. But—no more readily than that. What human being but first rebels and strives to have his own way when fate seems against him? Submission only follows when one feels that his will is beating against a rock, that there is a great, immovable Power behind the human agencies fighting him ; so that what he would have refused to a fellow-being he yields to Law. There are a few exceptional natures—and by no means the most excellent ones—so docile and meek as to submit without pain to personal coercion. They are capable of that spaniel-like affection which bows itself under abuse and clings helplessly after self-respect has been destroyed. But these make a type by themselves, and general remarks must be directed to the great average class. A self-respecting creature finds it impossible to completely give up to mere brute force; any such submission is transient and accompanied by an intention to get even at a future time. But a victory achieved by moral

force is permanent ; the most independent natures, which are also the noblest, feel a real pleasure in giving up to something manifestly superior to themselves. It is as if an advance had been made, enlightenment gained ; there is, not a blind obedience to autocratical authority, but an adoption of some principle of action common both to the mentor and themselves. This is the secret of making power durable : to have it appear that even authorities themselves are not exempt from law.

Parents are ordinarily fond of that very semblance of power which they ought, of all things, to avoid. We do not want to excite our children's animosity for the purpose of conquering them. The ideal would be to preserve always that calm, amicable relation which would make it seem that affairs flow on guided by some invisible agency. There ought never to be a waste of authority ; to display it is to abuse it ; and the great object is to train a child into necessary submission without exciting bad feeling. The honest truth is that it is circumstances which exact obedience, not only from children, but

from all. Why should parents pose as independent personages from whom law emanates, when such assumption only draws odium down upon them? The reason of a deal of wretchedness in families is not so much that children are disobedient to law, as that there is no real law, but only impulse. Richter tells a story of a soldier bearing a bundle of papers under each arm, who was asked, "What have you there—under your right arm?"—"Orders."—"And what under the other arm?"—"Counter-orders." And in the application of this anecdote to education he observes: "A mother may be compared to a giant Briarius, with a hundred arms, and a bundle of papers under each." A child cannot feel safe with such a petulant guardian. In self-defense he becomes watchful and suspicious, and comes soon to openly question the judgment so often at fault. Yet it is not so much the fallibility which engenders contempt, as the deceit. A mother constantly repeats that she loves her child, and yet she hectors him; envelops him in an atmosphere of fault-finding and wearis him by a thou-

sand useless little restraints. He is often reproved when walking with her, for skipping instead of moving along demurely, for asking questions, for being too much a live thing with independent motive power, and too little of a machine. This is a certain way to weaken affection and destroy desire for obedience. Interference, however forceful, can be borne, when it relates to important affairs; but interference with little things, which every one recognizes as trivial, is intolerable, both because it destroys all liberty of action and because it plainly shows a fault-finding, domineering spirit in the person exercising the restraint.

Sometimes not selfishness, but that over-solicitude called "fussiness" leads a parent astray. Of course a small child must be protected daily and hourly from harm, but such interposition should not be thrust upon his notice until he can see the sense of it. It must not only be conceded, as it sometimes is with a sigh of despair, as if one wished for a remedy for the dreadful fact; but it must be borne in mind at all times, as a permanent rule,

that the child's life being at first nearly altogether objective, incessant bodily activity is natural to him. His dwelling is a laboratory, in which he carries on all sorts of experiments. The grown person sits still and cognizes the properties of all things through the sense of sight, past experience supplying him with data from which to form a judgment. But the child depends mainly for information upon the sense of touch; all other senses being comparatively untrustworthy. Some naturalists assert that all other senses have developed from the sense of touch. This would furnish a sufficient explanation of the primary dependence placed upon it by the inexperienced investigator. The natural order of education is to begin with the concrete and proceed to the abstract, and touch being the least abstract sense, it is the first natural avenue to knowledge. Not only is the child to gain information through this means, but he is so to achieve his moral education. A judicious parent, instead of impulsively interfering with all those bodily activities which seem to his sober mind dangerous and useless, will re-

late to these experiments his own advice and friendly caution, standing aside and letting nature have her way with the child, while he makes it apparent that he is ready to be called upon in case of need and glad to give required help.

In all cases where a slight hurt will educate interference should be withheld. Herbert Spencer demonstrates in the clearest manner that a warning of danger followed by sympathy, when the warning has been verified, is the most effective way of inspiring a child with confidence in his parents and fixing in his mind an impression of actions to be avoided. And it ought to be borne in mind that the experience is enough, without tiresome iterations on the part of the parent that it has suffered for disobedience. That fact is known already, and the effort to impress it more deeply is revolting, and arouses an animosity which is, most of all things, to be avoided.

“Do not,” advises Richter, “indulge in that *after punishment* women are so prone to, of coldness or anger.” These are circumstances in which unreflecting

relatives and more especially, ignorant servants, frequently work great mischief. On the street, when a little child falls down in running, one hears such an exclamation from the nurse as: "There, miss! I told you so! What a naughty child! I am going to tell your mother!" Instead of the lesson of carefulness that would otherwise have been learned, there springs up defiance that becomes indifference to reproof felt to be unmerited. Suppose a child does soil its clothes by careless tripping, where does the fault lie? Not in the tripping, perfectly harmless in itself: he might trip along for blocks and never be checked did not some accident occur. The fault, then, lies in his want of balance: an excusable defect, it might seem, in a creature just learning the use of its legs! There is far too much thoughtless expostulation, too much placing the blame where it does not belong. A large proportion of the offenses of children occur accidentally; their motives may be excellent, yet their actions bear the appearance of naughtiness. One cannot be too cautious in charging home an offense. It is

far better to err on the side of neglecting correction than on the side of unjust punishment. This last is something that a child *never* recovers from. The memory of it may even embitter his feelings toward his parents after he has reached maturity. Love, confidence, and obedience should grow up side by side in a childish heart; it must be won, not coerced. Where obedience exists alone there is either a lamentable want of character in the child, as well as unnatural coldness on the part of the parents; or else, there is a latent feeling of hostility in the bottom of the child's heart, which surely will some day come to the surface and nullify all the good of restraints exercised over him.

The combative instinct is a natural one, and is necessary to our preservation. All possess it to a greater or less extent, and as it is a blind, indiscriminate instinct, it has to be trained, so that it shall come to exercise itself only in the proper direction. A child does not at first distinguish the opposition of his parents from that of any other hostile force; it is perfectly repug-

nant to him. How is he to be reconciled to it—how is a parent to reveal himself so as to make the child feel, long before he can reason about it, that he is the guardian and protector of his interests? Only by associating the necessary authority with his welfare, in ways so plain that the young mind can see the connection. For instance, suppose a child creeps toward a hot stove, intent on putting his hand upon it. If a mother can exercise such restraint over herself as to permit him to barely touch it before she draws him away, she will have taught him a lesson, for the baby, whose sensations are acute, will realize that the stove is his foe and the mother his friend, and he never could have comprehended that if he had been withdrawn before he had felt for himself that the stove hurt him. The mother may then strive to make him understand the two words "don't," and "hot," and then the next time he is in danger from such a source the repetition of those two words will bring the affair to his memory, and he will associate "don't" with safety. But mere words mean

nothing to a child, and all the tender language that could be uttered would not impress him without the smile and caress accompanying them ; nor all the warnings without his associating them with some past experience. As the child's whole education, moral as well as intellectual—indeed, the two cannot be divorced—is to proceed upon the idea of association, it is especially requisite never to create a confusion in his mind by crowding lessons upon him. Select what is most important and dwell upon that, in order to produce a clear impression, ignoring for the time many other matters of conduct that may have to be noticed in the future. It is a great mistake to reprove a child for everything he does that is wrong : life will then become to him a monotonous burden of one song. Some old philosopher remarked that in dealing with children he found it well to “be a little deaf, a little dumb, and a little blind.”

To have in mind a distinct plan and compel ourselves to defer to it is the only way to succeed in dealing justly with our

children. "We need an ideal to work toward." And although this ideal can never be wholly realized, because we can never carry into the heat and hurry of active life accurate recollections of our calmly reasoned-out views "yet we should aim to advance *toward* perfection not away from it." Disinterestedness and self-control on the part of the parent; love, confidence, and obedience on the part of the child—how is the relation to be sustained when once happily begun?

## CHAPTER V.

### WE SHOULD ASSOCIATE NATURAL CONSEQUENCES WITH ACTS.

“Nothing tends so much to prevent the healthful development of the moral sense as the infliction of punishment which the child feels to be unjust; and nothing retards the acquirement of the power of directing the intellectual processes so much as the emotional disturbance which the feeling of injustice provokes.”

—DR. CARPENTER.

IN dealing with the young we are apt to greatly over-estimate the amount of force necessary to produce the desired effect upon them. The organization of a child is naturally as sensitive as the strings of an *Æolian* harp, and he feels acutely every change in looks, manners, and voice of those about him. The slightest manifestation of moodiness in his parent is as depressing as clouds passing over the sun. Without comprehending the source of the mental disturbance,

children are moved to reflect the emotions of their parents, particularly when the relations existing between them are intimate and tender. They are excited to anger against persons they hear censured, and treat with deference those apparently preferred. The participation in the parental feelings of preference and aversion is so general that people can usually gauge with accuracy the degree of estimation in which they are held by their friends from the manner of their children toward them. Unversed in hypocrisy they frankly betray their real sentiments, and to hear their impulsive talk is often like listening to a phonograph which has registered the private opinions of its confidant. This close resemblance does not arise so much from mental similarity as from the faculty of imitation, which leads children to adopt the very trifling habits of their elders, even to seasoning their food in the same fashion. When the age of reason comes such habits are often so confirmed as to be unchangeable. We wield a vast influence, therefore, over young minds invol-

untarily, and our daily conduct shapes their character and moulds their opinions. We instruct and guide them in this way unceasingly and with far more effect than when our efforts to do so are directly put forth, for when moved to admonish their children parents are often affected and pedantical, assuming a degree of virtue which is unnatural and contrary to their ordinary practice, and consequently lacking in that ring of honesty and earnestness which makes advice impressive. It is proper that parents should, as they usually do, wish their children to be an improvement upon themselves, that they should be better educated and in every way more virtuous and worthy. But this is not to be brought about through the means commonly undertaken. The comparatively few times in which we climb to a moral height and surpass ourselves in the giving wise advice cannot offset the numberless lapses we make every day from the standard we advocate for them, and there is no way to compel them to see only what we want them to see, to make them

alive to good impressions, and impervious to bad ones. They take us all in all, as we are, and follow pretty closely the example we set where we are least desirous and most unconscious of setting any at all.

Much of the severity parents sometimes find necessary is doubtless an indispensable leverage away from their own very fallible example, toward their theoretical standard of goodness. They think by a forcible and sudden jerk to twitch children in the right direction, and against their own laxity and carelessness they pit stern control, partly as an instinctive effort to save their offspring from repeating their own mistake, and partly, it must be confessed, because the more imperfect people are themselves the less able are they to endure imperfections in others. Nothing is more exasperating than to see one's own fault repeated, and this is why a high-tempered person loathes an exhibition of temper, why pride is mortally offended at meeting pride, and a man prone to deceit is desperately incensed when some one lies to him. My own

observation inclines me to think that there is "a reason for being" occasionally in the despotically repressive measures imperious and high-tempered parents use to prevent similar explosions on the part of their children. As there is often "a soul of good in things evil" even tyranny has its indirect use. Where judicious management is totally lacking, children would inevitably grow up to be public terrors were it not for the restraint offered by fear. Although the whole tendency of this age is toward mildness in the administration of public and private government, it is not to be supposed that all the members of the community, nor even the majority, have reached such a stage of enlightenment as renders it likely that they are ready to bestow, nor their children ready to be benefited by a system of ideally perfect government. There is enough of the savage element present to make it apparent in instances here and there that harsh and cruel parents sometimes rear worthy children. By the exertion of a force amounting to savagery they succeed in compelling their

offspring to suppress their faults, and by the practice of a rigid obedience acquire that indifference to the promptings of their individual nature which bears the semblance of self-command. But every one who has made observations in this field must acknowledge that the educative influence of fear, while not wholly productive of ill-consequences in the case of persons whose mental organization is of a low order, and who are not very sensitive, is altogether pernicious when applied to beings of a higher type. Increased sensitiveness to external impressions accompanies complexity of nervous structure, and the children of refined and cultured parents naturally require a comparatively slight stimulus to influence them to the desired action. If this fact was not so commonly overlooked there would be far less trouble involved in managing them. But as the opinion prevails that a child is a stupid and willful being who has to be perpetually admonished and reminded, there is an overflow of reproof and caution, frequently coming not from the parents themselves, but

from the coarser minds of hirelings, who treat their charges as they were treated themselves in infancy, thus injuring and warping their susceptible nature and inducing an artificial callousness which never should exist. Where such injurious influences have been absent the most high-spirited child is tractable because sensitive. Authority is able to exert itself in subtle ways. I once heard a little one, accustomed to a certain pitch of voice, ask anxiously, "What is the matter, mamma?" when the mother had unconsciously spoken lower than usual. An affectionate child will watch the countenance of his mother and detect weariness and grief almost before she realizes it herself. But this sympathy, so delicious and soothing, is the outcome only of tender and intimate relations. Neglect is a frost-bite from which there is no recovery. Many seemingly remarkable transformations of character which children undergo would be comprehensible if parents had that acquaintance with the principles of psychology which is really essential to good government.

The patient tracing back of effects to their primary causes would often lead to such a surprising fact as that a child's confidence, repelled at some moment constituting a crisis in his life, converted him from a frank, generous creature into a moody little skeptic; or that an act of unmerited harshness on the part of his guardians, brooded over in silence, produced an entire alteration in his sentiments and feelings. We should also, by knowing something of motive and will and the emotions, be able to induce right states of feeling in our pupils simply by judicious direction of their thoughts in certain lines, leading them to do the work of thinking for themselves and so benefiting them a thousand-fold more than if we simply made the statement that such a thing is right or wrong. A baby of two or three can have its conduct so pictured to its eyes as to be able to realize something of its intrinsic nature through the effect it produces upon other people. The whole dependence must be placed at first upon bringing about in a child's mind the *right association*. Upon the

delicate, plastic fiber of the little brain we must work gently and patiently until the associations we aim to bring about are wrought naturally by repeated slight experiences. The consequences of different sorts of conduct must be always clear and manifest; pleasure and pain, which are the great educative moral influences should be inseparably connected with their proper antecedents. What must a child think who suffers one time from naughtiness and the next time escapes "scot-free?" He thereafter believes that chance is the ruling factor in this matter, and if the temptation is sufficient he will take the risk of following his own impulse, rather than suffer a disagreeable restraint.

Professor Bain observes that ideas of right and wrong have grown up through the association of the one sort of conduct with pleasure, and of the other sort with pain. "Actions that have long been connected in the mind with pains and penalties, come to be contemplated with *disinterested* repugnance; they seem to give pain on their own account." Children

know that certain experiences are disagreeable long before they are capable of comprehending such abstract ideas as right and wrong. When the conditions are natural, and they have been gently treated, the slightest correction makes a profound impression. A baby will pucker up its face and betray considerable discomfort upon being quietly taken out of his mother's lap and placed in a crib or chair by himself, after he has been unreasonably cross. I use the adjective advisedly, for very much of the crossness of infants has adequate cause. Few people realize how absolutely indispensable to the comfort of these young creatures is an equable temperature, in every sense. As the room should not be one day warm and the next day cool, nor clothing and diet subject to caprice; so there should be avoided all unnecessary excitements, confusing to tender minds, and all fluctuations of management. There are persons so lacking in scientific perception as to contest that children should not be permitted to form invariable habits, lest it should be a source of inconvenience

when traveling, or some other disturbance, interferes with regular routine. They might just as well object to their own breakfast or bath on the same principle. But it does not make the slightest difference whether the formation of habits is convenient or inconvenient. Nature's mode of development lies along this line. Intellect and the moral sense have grown up through the law of association. Unless there exists the desire to make life difficult for children and subject them over and over again to unnecessary hardships of discipline the attempt ought to be made from the first to establish that harmonious adjustment between themselves and their environment which grows up solely through habit.

This is the advice most earnestly given by all moral educators; that *repeated slight experiences* in the right direction is the only natural and rational way of developing in children a knowledge of morality; that is, of arousing in them a conscience. What caution must be exercised then, to make disagreeable experiences coincide only with acts that must

always be avoided, that such acts may come to be distasteful in themselves.

The first rule that a parent should bind himself to follow is that of certainty ; of the unvarying fulfillment of whatever mode of correction he has settled upon for the offense. Jacob Abbott says: "It is surprising how slight a punishment will prove efficacious if it is only *certain* to follow the transgression." A penalty has to be often repeated, because the child's mind retains sensations more readily than ideas ; and there are great individual differences in sensibility. Some children have a tactile insensibility which makes them unaware of changes of temperature and prevents their suffering much from such ordinary hurts as bruises and burns. This does not necessarily indicate lack of feeling of the higher sort. I know one child who, from earliest infancy, exhibited an astonishing power of bearing pain, so that frequently quite serious scars were discovered upon his body, showing some hurt which had provoked no complaint. Yet he was of a peculiarly affectionate, clinging disposition, greatly dreading to be left

alone, and loving to nestle close to his mother and nurse. As he grew older he displayed an unusual capacity for sympathy and showed keen susceptibilities, yet there has remained withal a certain bodily unimpressionability, so that infliction of corporal punishment, which was sometimes injudiciously employed, had the effect of moving him to laughter, partly hysterical, no doubt. It is notable that when this was wholly discontinued, and the effort made to deal with him through appeal to his affections, that he became not only more docile, although naturally of an obstinate and willful disposition, but all his mental processes began to grow more normal. From being subject to gusts of passion and caprice which frequently excited grave fears as to his sanity, he settled down to a rational demeanor, though remaining emotional and impulsive. Only careful study of the peculiar nature of this child, and inquiry into the reason for the existence of certain traits that proved to be congenital, would have enabled his guardians to deal with him intelligently. It is evident

that children must be considered separately and their native oddities taken into account. Hasty generalizing is often cruelly unjust, and so is the habit of believing that many acts which are offensive show moral depravity.

A writer remarks: "It is frequently found that a defect which appears to be simply intellectual or moral is connected with a morbid or imperfect state of the body. Indolence is so unnatural that it usually depends upon some physical defect. Mind-wandering is frequently connected with nervous debility. These are only to be remedied by attention to health, and to the degree and methods of occupation. Irritation and impatience often arise from the same cause."

Children who, unfortunately, inherit very nervous organizations, usually accompanied by great irritability, suffer more than their just share of punishment, while the child possessed of a placid, gentle disposition gets credit for the intentional practice of virtue, which is in nowise deserved. In proportion to the strength of the feelings is the difficulty of controlling

them. Obstinacy does not indicate a desire to displease so much as a tenacious grasp, a fixity of purpose, which is often called, in after life, when it no longer opposes us, perseverance and courage. A high-spirited, strong-willed child should by no means be exempt from control, but the control should be in a way subtle and tender, not of the sort which humiliates him. A cheerful, pleasing environment, by soothing and interesting him, has a beneficial influence. All external aids, such as diverting his mind by a funny story, or exhibiting some pleasant little surprise, should be employed, rather than throwing the burden of self-command entirely upon the child himself. This is too hard, because the motive power is insufficient. Sully observes: "The acquisition of the power of controlling feeling is a difficult and slow process. Children's feelings are characterized by great intensity, and their complete possession and mastery of the mind. Hence, the effort to check the outgoings of passion is a severe one."

Wherever tact can be employed it

should be substituted for force. We want to help our children to acquire mastery over themselves, instead of dominating them. But parents who aim to develop the individuality of their children, and to educate them in harmony with the higher and more enlightened modern methods, must be prepared to see them, in their tender years, contrast unfavorably, in point of docility, with children reared after the old-fashioned, repressive system. It is necessary to bear in mind the aim of our efforts, otherwise we may be tempted to renounce in some moment of impulse and discouragement, better but more difficult methods, for the government by force, which appears, when viewed from the point of view of our own egotism, desirable.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CONFICTING AUTHORITIES OUGHT TO BE AVOIDED.

“ It is equitable not to estimate errors and injuries as deserving equal punishment, nor errors and misfortunes: misfortunes happen, not from depravity, but contrary to expectation. Errors do not happen contrary to expectation, and are not from depravity; but injuries are such things as are not effected contrary to expectation, but proceed from depravity.”

ARISTOTLE.

A PARENT must keep constantly before his eyes the fact that his authority is restricted. It relates to two different sorts of action: that which is right or wrong, and that which is simply a matter of propriety or impropriety. These distinctions are never entirely clear to us, even in affairs relating to our larger world, and how vague and fluctuating they become when we are called upon to decide

the character of all the little affairs of the nursery. Yet, in justice to our children, we should make a great difference between acts that are always wrong, independently of anybody's wishes or convenience, and those that are only wrong because they are personally offensive to us or untimely. Children are much scolded merely for being inopportune. But it is most injudicious to find fault with a thing simply because it happens to annoy you at that particular minute, when it would not annoy you if you were feeling differently. Wise government necessitates a certain power of diagnosis of conduct. Superficial judgments can take no account of motive, and it is the motive which gives the character to the act. We should take great pains to find out *why* children act so and so. Often inquiry reveals that there is no purpose underlying their behavior, and that their headlong rush against some preference of their elders comes from awkwardness or ignorance. Parents often act as if the common transgressions of children were deliberate insults to themselves, which they are bound to avenge, instead

of considering that they are usually the result of bad judgment in young persons; of impulse; curiosity; and where they "have been trained to disobedience," of willfulness.

The latter unfortunate result is brought about sometimes by the characteristic inconsistency of one parent, and sometimes from there being too many authorities in a household, probably holding different views, and either accidentally or carelessly betraying this lack of harmony in the presence of the child. I always pity a child who lives in a house with several of his relations, especially if they have a genius for management. It recalls the story of a southern regiment where all the gentlemen in the county joined as officers, and but one man would consent to be a private soldier. And the officers drilled him to death. Mrs. Stowe, in her delightful "*Oldtown Folks*" relates how "Aunt Keziah," "Aunt Lois," and "Grandma" would utter simultaneously their separate commands, and "Harry" would then stand, "with a droll look upon his face, waiting until they had settled it among

themselves" who was to be mistress. Harry was an exceptional, not to say an ideal, boy. The ordinary boy would be likely to perceive more of the perplexity than the humor of such a situation. I know of one child, naturally straightforward and conscientious, and, being rich in relations, each possessed of a singularly opposite individuality, and while mutually affectionate, yet holding each other's opinions in contempt, she used often to go about with an expression of settled despair, asking of her own mind, "What *is* right? One person says one thing, and one person says another, and whatever I do seems to be wrong." The consequence of this training was to set the girl in a measure at variance with the world. Forced constantly to make decisions involving contempt for some natural authority, her tender heart became embittered, and there was developed an obstinate pride and unyieldingness which had its origin entirely in the idea that every one desired to impose upon and subordinate her.

Dissension between father and mother

constitutes one of the most dangerous atmospheres to which a child can be subjected. Where there are radical differences of opinion and sentiment, it is inevitable that he should take one side and plume himself upon becoming a supporter. And even when the bickerings are trivial in amount and character, they exert a deleterious influence, particularly if they have a bearing upon the child's conduct. I trace the subsequent insubordination and disrespect of one child for whose willfulness nobody seemed able to account, to a little scene at the breakfast-table, when he was but sixteen months old, where his mother objected to his wastefully crumbling up several biscuits, and his father, happening to be in an irritable frame of mind, asserted that he should "have all the biscuits he wanted" and handed the baby the plate, to help himself. The mother would have been wise to let the matter drop, under the circumstances, but she was high-spirited, and feeling insulted, "showed fight," and a lively argument ensued which ended in a screaming baby being removed from the table with a con-

firmed impression that he was thereafter to have his own way since his papa was his champion.

Such incidents as this are by no means uncommon. Controversies between mothers and grandmothers frequently occur, and the charge is often made, "His grandmother spoiled him," or, "I cannot do anything with him,—his father indulges him so." Where is the fault, oh, parent? Not with any one person, but with the pair, with the trio, with the whole family. Too many guardians have been the ruin of fine natures. It is seldom that the views of two persons in the same family entirely agree as to the proper rearing of a child, and if every one is to have his own way in turn there will not only be immense confusion, but the carrying out of any systematic rule of conduct by the person most concerned is rendered impossible. The person most concerned is the father and mother. They must be unified. If essentially separable, then, for the child's sake, one should be the authority, and the other consent to be merely passive. In America this often happens,

not so much from incapacity or indifference, as through the preoccupation of the father. Men often observe good-naturedly, "I leave the management of the youngsters entirely to the care of my wife, I never interfere." This may or may not be for the best. It is not the ideal. Rousseau speaks of "the father being the true teacher as the mother is the true nurse," but the cases are rare where the father is able to be all to his child that the relation demands. The best government obtains in those exceptional families where the parents are always to one another "like a pair of lovers," united in aim and wish, and upholding each other faithfully in private as before the world. Where this atmosphere of repose exists children seldom manifest restlessness or rebellion. Disaffection among the ruling powers is what most frequently gives rise to their ebullitions of temper, and quite naturally, for cheerful compliance with the wishes of others can only occur when there is unshaken confidence in their wisdom and consistency; and the least show of bickering destroys this.

There are parents who have so little regard for the individuality of their children that they require them to be submissive on general principles ; " to mind anybody." This cannot but produce a subserviency destructive to the best interests of the child. While approving a respectful demeanor towards elders simply on the score of superiority in age and experience, thoughtful observers must be led to remark that justice demands that only his natural guardians should be privileged to exercise authority over the child, and that this should be restricted, as far as possible, to one person. Either the two parents acting in harmony, or one acting alone. This is the only authority which extends itself over a long period of time, or can be regarded as having permanent weight and influence. Any other is transitory and relates to the needs of the hour, and in general, to the superficial observances of life. And it is only equitable to require of a child a certain consideration and deference for the wishes of his relatives and elder friends, not to exact of him the obedience he owes only to his parents, and

which they have no right to transfer to others while they live.

It may be that the above opinion, being contrary to the general easy-going practice, will seem unnecessarily precise, but it will, I think, stand investigating. We are proceeding upon the basis of there being in the parent's mind "an ideal to work toward;" an ideal only formulated after painstaking study of the principles of natural equity and the laws of human development. Hard as he himself finds it to keep ever in view the welfare of his child, and to act in each case deliberately and conscientiously, with due regard to his convictions, how can he impart to others such a complete conception of this "working ideal" as may prevent the clashing of their opinions and ways with his own? It is practically impossible. Usually the less people know the more tenaciously they know that, and the more incapable they are of entering into the plans and ideas of others the more obstinately they are bent upon procedures which have no method in them but self-will. A parent will find himself contra-

dicted and set at naught by his own family, by his child's teachers, and by nurses, if he permits it. Each of them may be doing what they believe right and proper, but the result is unfortunate. As regards family, a parent must use tact to avert a superfluity of advice and control; as regards teachers, he has comparatively little to apprehend if his child has been trained in that self-command which makes it possible for him to quietly take his place among others, as the member of a little civic community. But this cannot always be. Without being in the least vicious, the child may possess traits which make individual consideration indispensable. He may be restless, nervous, volatile, or prone to dive to the bottom of every topic and ask many questions. Or he may have a real incapacity for getting information in routine ways and hate text-books. This distaste to study should by no means be taken as a sign of invincible stupidity, as it sometimes is. One recollects with comfort that Daniel Webster was repeatedly expelled from school; that Napoleon was only reported to be "very

healthy" and that some of the finest intellects of all periods have shown a decided aversion to the discipline imposed by others, and have been unable to learn much or do anything important until they reached the age to impose the necessary mental discipline upon themselves. When a child shows himself rebellious to the rules of a school, the teacher is compelled, from the nature of his position, to treat him as an offender. Individual consideration, leniency toward personal peculiarities, is out of the question. But this is, while seemingly a necessary condition of the schools, as at present managed, a very undesirable state of affairs. Some principals of private institutions, recognizing the need of reform in school-government, have had the courage to adopt some original methods, which they deem more in harmony with nature. Advertisements appear from time to time, for "pupils who have been unfortunate in other schools or have been mis-managed at home." And sometimes the most surprising transformation of character takes place in a child by removing him from a regular school to an

institution of this sort, where the prime object is not learning, but the development of character, which is, slow as people are to recognize the fact, the only education having any value.

One encounters at every turn some dogmatical sentence meant to be death to progress. People often uphold the machine methods which have so long prevailed in all institutions of learning, and are being gradually abandoned, by the argument that children should be early habituated to harsh discipline that they may be fitted to endure the after-discipline of the world. It is true that birds born in captivity are less apt to pine for freedom than those caught and tamed. But is the world as bad as it is represented, in this respect—is it really a prison? On the contrary, there never was a time when character and talent had such an opportunity to create for itself a happy destiny. Originality is at a premium, and one touch of personal power goes farther than tons of learning. The person having the original power will get the learning necessary to him, though he should be reared

where there are neither schools nor teachers. But the point is that unhappiness is not a necessary part of the preparation for life, since the world will let even grown people be happy if they can. And children should not be suppressed upon the principle of getting them used to suppression. We should avoid "over-government" which produces slaves, much out of place in our enlightened age.

Among the most serious adverse influences working against model government must be reckoned the authority and companionship of servants. Many children are left almost entirely in charge of nurses who are trusted with a power so unlimited that it can only be accounted for by ignorance or thoughtlessness of parents. It is inconceivable that they would permit it if they realized its extent. The nurse who is with her charge all day, who is the first person to see him in the morning and who puts him to rest at night, not only is the custodian of his health and happiness, but she exercises an influence which moulds his moral character, and so she has in her keeping not only the pres-

ent, but the future. Is not this a trust beyond the capacity, not only of the ordinary girls who are most often invested with it, but even of an exceptionally well-trained and conscientious maid? What stranger, springing necessarily from a less refined and cultured ancestry, and lacking, therefore, that innate perception of differences essential to the sympathetic comprehension of even an average child, can come into a family and, taking the place of a mother, adequately perform a mother's duties? It is certain that, even with the best intentions, she will make grave mistakes, for she will lack knowledge of all those antecedent circumstances which play so large a part in governing a child's conduct. It is continually necessary to take many remote factors into account, to study children, not only as they are, but as they cannot help being, from their hereditary tendencies and their environment.

In America nurses are seldom allowed positively to punish their charges, but they are not restricted from threatening them, and this is very nearly as bad. A perpetual little rain of denunciations and scoldings

is almost as evil an atmosphere as a child can be subjected to. He then soon loses his sensitiveness and becomes hardened to reproof. They become more and more a matter of course until he attaches no importance to them. Consequently, when he really needs correction it has to be severe in order to be impressive. Higher authority is called in and harsh measures resorted to, of which the most pitiful thing is, that when once begun they are apt to be continued. For unkind thoughts follow each severe punishment and widen a breach between parent and child.

I have heard it remarked among experienced parents, that those of their children who had had nurses were far more troublesome than the ones who had been raised without. Naturally, the latter being more with their mothers had arrived at a better mutual understanding, as well as having been exempt from alien legislation. But there is another fact to be taken into account, and this is, that in all probability, they had more liberty of action. People do not realize the extent of the "hector-

ing" which children under the constant care of servants, undergo. Only intelligent, self-controlled minds have the capacity for silent watchfulness, which is the sort of care desirable for a child. Generally there is far too much talking, the greater part of which is unintelligible to the ears it is directed to. One clear-cut sentence, timely and appropriate, conveys more than the discussion of an hour. So one avoids curtness, the fewer words the better.

Many little faults for which children are chided are not worth noticing: they are inevitable to their period of life and will be outgrown, if we have patience to wait. How often we are guilty of the folly of digging up the seeds in our human garden to see if they have sprouted! It is easy, too, to overcrowd the soil. One temptation ever presents itself to a parent; to substitute his own experience and knowledge for the natural education of time and opportunity, and by saving his child all mistakes, enable him to arrive at something near perfection. He inclines to believe that the mere telling and show-

ing will enlighten. But alas, each mortal has to work out his own salvation, and vicarious experience is of little account.

Our offspring are "an unknown quantity," and viewing them in the cradles we think that with opportunity they may become anything. Parental ambition is satisfied with nothing less than what the despairing gardener told his exacting customer she wanted "everything in one rose." But not only is child-nature faulty, but all human nature has its natural limitations. As a mild suggestion upon this point I quote the following cautious sentence: "I would venture to remind parents of the necessity of practicing on themselves that fortitude and patience they desire to cultivate in their young charges."

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE JUDICIOUS MANAGEMENT OF EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS.

“Remember that the chaos of unreason in childhood is itself, in some measure, an incapacity of a relatively diseased sort, and that the wise teacher is a sort of physician who is to help the child toward gaining that sort of health we call maturity.”—ROYCE.

THE great difficulty in the path of parents is that while children uniformly unfold in character in the natural order of development, the traditional methods of management, and such as are customarily employed, not only take no account of this order, but invert it, aiming to make the child develop in a way contrary to his powers and possibilities. Life is, in its first manifestation, purely sensuous, and as feeling thus belongs wholly to the present moment, there being no recollections of the past, there

is lacking that modification and restraint which palliates suffering. So a child's feelings are intense in proportion to the narrowness of his experience; for all that he knows, pain may last forever, and the passionate revolt he makes is his instinctive protest, uncontrollable, because it is the blind, frightened instinct of self-preservation.

We know how appalling is a novel sort of catastrophe, whose limitations we are not able to estimate, and that therefore falls upon us with crushing power. What is called "getting used to a thing" is nothing but the growth of representation, which recalls to mind the degree of discomfort formerly endured, and so there is conveyed the reassurance that as we were able to survive that much we will very probably come unscathed through what we are undergoing now. But to children many new and startling experiences occur every day, startling because unparalleled, and so exciting outbursts of emotion resembling anger, but which are often compounded of aversion and fright. It is a common observation among people

watching a crying child—"Oh, she is only crying from *temper*—nothing is the matter with her." Is that degree of mental disturbance which leads to tears and sobbing, sometimes convulsive, so slight a thing as to demand no special investigation and make no call upon our sympathy? Disapproval should be in proportion to the amount of intention in the act, not in proportion to the disagreeable effect produced upon beholders. And summary punishment for the passionate outbursts of children is simply cruelty. There are two ways of managing such natural and inevitable fits: by the exhibition in ourselves of more extreme violence; and by the exercise of such self-command as will enable us to detect the quality of the disturbance and through the employment of tact, bring the demented one to his senses. A sober judgment can hardly hesitate which choice to make. But the trouble is that the right way is—troublesome. It takes intelligence as well as virtue to appreciate the character of something which offends and distresses us. The long way in this case is, how-

ever, the shortest in the end. When we have learned how to deal with a child once we have the key to all future management.

The primary characteristic of all childish emotions is their transitoriness. Grief, anger, fear, yield quickly to the succeeding feeling excited by a new cause. Diversion of mind is the natural way of pacifying wrong feelings. They should be prevented expression by making expression of the opposite feeling necessary. Soothing wounded feeling is the stimulating of pleasing emotions in another direction, as when a child is led to forgetfulness of a lost toy by the recital of an interesting story. But it is so easy for all general rules to be abused that even the most commonplace idea, which this idea of the diversion of a child's mind from grief is, may be absurdly interpreted. Yesterday I saw a mother, holding an intelligent-looking baby in a crowded railway station, try to calm its crying, which quite apparently arose from excitement at the noise and confusion—by trotting it roughly on her knees.

Looking away and talking animatedly to an acquaintance, she gave the baby not an instant's attention, but finally thrusting a bottle of milk into its mouth, continued her mechanical trotting until the bottle was shaken out of its mouth, and its low, bewildered crying recommenced. Such intelligent management as this may be expected to bring on "tantrums" later on.

It is a radical error to be careless of provoking children. All emotions are latent, and it is desirable that those we wish to remain weak should be allowed to remain latent. The longer they remain unexercised the less forceful they will be ultimately. Sully remarks in his *Handbook of Psychology*: "In the matter of feelings it is emphatically true that prevention is better than cure. We must take care that children with a strong disposition to violent temper should not be exposed to circumstances likely to inflame their passions. An envious child ought not to be placed in a situation which is pretty certain to excite this feeling. An emotional susceptibility may to

some extent be weakened and even 'starved out' by want of exercise."

The advantage of aiding a child to suppress emotional susceptibilities is that we thus give him time to develop those superior mental faculties which offset and control feeling. But for the "saving grace" of such knowledge as we possess and which keeps up always a certain amount of intellectual activity, few adults would be able to exercise more control over their feelings than children do. Plato thought ignorance the real vice and knowledge the real virtue. Idiots manifest, in the violence of their passions, how excessive is the tyranny of mere sensation. We cannot reason with a young child, but we can use our own reason for him; we can stimulate mental activity by furnishing some object to his perception, or by introducing some pleasing excitant of emotion which may replace the disagreeable one. It is said that children under three or four are not appreciative of musical harmony, but it is certain that even if lacking at this age in the musical sense, they are susceptible to

musical sounds. I was once witness of a scene in the country where a little boy of eighteen months, an excessively nervous, excitable child, fell into an unaccountable "furor" which nothing could appease. He threw himself on the grass and screamed, until his parents withdrew in despair, thinking to let the paroxysm exhaust itself. A young lady at this juncture was inspired to go to the piano and play some of her usual airs. The soft strains of the music wound through the house, and reaching the excited child produced an instant effect. Gradually his screaming ceased, he got up and, after a little hesitation, ran toward the house and made straight for the piano, his little frame trembling violently, and his crying now being subdued to a low sobbing which presently ceased altogether. After listening for a few moments he went over to his mother and fell asleep in her arms, exhausted, but at peace. The parents of this child were themselves exceptionally nervous, sensitive people, and the circumstances surrounding his birth had been so peculiar as to affect the mental organ-

ization of the child adversely. He needed the most delicate and sympathetic management, and it would have been impossible for strangers to have had patience with him. No outsider can see beyond the "trying" traits of a child, the confusing and contradictory impulses to which he may be subject from his inheritance. Philosophy must reinforce affection, for however strong the mere "sense of duty" it can never stand the strain one small human being, a reproduction of our own faults and more beside, can make upon it in a single day.

But the one wisdom that never fails, that is present from the beginning to the end, is the wisdom that we most seldom have in mind and to which we trust the least. Nature is the first, the true mother and educator. She governs rigidly, but without harshness or partiality; with wordless justice. Says Rousseau sagaciously, "We must follow and assist nature." This happens when we relate the penalty of an offense to itself. Thus, When a child has been cross to his companions, leave him to play by himself

until such time as he asks to be allowed the privilege of being with them again. The least show of parental anger should be avoided, for that will increase the child's irritation and prevent his regaining control of himself. A good-humored rebuke, such a reminder as the question, "Do you think you can make yourself so pleasant now that they will *want* you?" will be far more efficacious than frown or sermon. There is nothing that a child is so sure to suffer from among his companions, as temper. With the little ones it is a heinous social impropriety, and a young Hotspur learns prudence and amiability much more certainly through companionship with other children than his parents could teach him. "The desire to keep the good opinion of others," observes Dr. McCosh, "often makes the tyranny exercised over boys by their companions, in workshops, in schools, and colleges, more formidable than any wielded by the harshest masters or rulers."

We may save our children much by observing wherein lies their tendency to err, and kindly pointing it out to them.

But leave them free to choose, and to enjoy or suffer, as may be. When punishment is certain to follow in due course, as it will in the case of nearly all social offenses, it is better for us to leave the matter alone. We have a large jurisdiction, and a heavy responsibility; no need to try to extend it. It is well to make punishment distinctive. An ingenious parent can readily devise some new penalty for every conspicuous wrong action; the slighter the better, for its effect depends not upon its severity but upon its certainty. Some little irksome restraint or task is enough. In every case the parent must control his own feelings, so as not to entertain for an instant the idea that his child has offended him, and *therefore* punishment follows. This is to make it retributive, revengeful, and not remedial, as it should be. A great mistake too, is to make punishment cumulative—for general naughtiness. It is wrong to let a child go on doing many trivial acts, each in itself insufficient to constitute an offense, and then administer correction on general principles.

If a wrong act is not noticed at the appropriate time it should not be noticed later. A parent is not a Nemesis, to keep account of misdemeanors and bear down heavily upon the offender in the course of time. He cannot safely express either anger or revenge; only sorrow. And even that guardedly. He must take care not to make the effect out of proportion to the cause, and throw a gloom over the child's life by an exaggerated show of grief. A look, a sigh, sometimes makes a wonderfully lasting impression. In Alice Cary's beautiful poem, "An Order for a Picture," the man, recalling his mother's sorrowful gaze into his guilty little face when his baby lips had lied to her, cries out :

" But, oh, that look of reproachful woe!  
High as the heavens your name I'll shout  
If you'll paint me the picture and leave that out!"

How gentle must have been that mother's ordinary look, when her grief sank so deeply into the memory of her erring child.

Lying is, perhaps, the most difficult of all faults to visit with its adequate and

appropriate punishment. Wrong management may so easily confirm it into a habit, and when this is established it is well-nigh incurable. An appeal to the child's moral sense is the only safe measure: sternness must absolutely be avoided, for, as lying shows fear, anything which increases this sentiment only drives the culprit further away from truth. The tendency toward falsehood should be counteracted by strengthening the child's mind, imbuing him with courage and confidence; making him in a way, master of himself. Children are often driven to deceit by mere habits of fretfulness in their elders. They will begin by concealing little accidents and end by trying to keep everything out of sight which is likely to induce a "scolding." This "scolding" is the dread of childhood. I have heard little girls talking the matter over amongst themselves and vowing that it was the worst thing in the world! Fretfulness is too common. The nervous, overburdened mother frowns unconsciously when her little ones get in her way and interfere with her work; and when she

loses control of her face, her tongue slips the leash too, and a sharp word brings untimely dismay to a thoughtless but not naughty child.

It is a good rule never to reprove a child for causing inconvenience unless he has done so maliciously. I was once greatly impressed in witnessing an instance of self-restraint in a mother who had the reputation of being an admirable disciplinarian, on an occasion when her little girl broke a bracelet she had let her take in her hand. There was not a shade of impatience, not any allusion to carelessness, but the subject was instantly disposed of with the smiling remark, "I should not have let her have it."

Respecting all the minor affairs of life influence alone should be used to bring about the attitude we desire. Thinking, with Mandeville, that "the laws of good manners are a kind of lesser morality, for the better securing our pleasure in society," we ought to realize that there is a wide difference between offending the proprieties and deliberate wrong-doing. And no devious reasoning should lead to

the elevating a venial fault to the dignity of an offense by making it an object of distinct command. Some parents will think they have a right to punish a child for mis-using fork or spoon at the table, when, in fact, they had no right to issue commands concerning these matters at all. The only rule here must be suggestion and example.

We wish, above all, that our children should grow up honest and upright. Well, then, we must be content to let many little things slip. I have observed that some of the finest spirits, those bent on high aims, have a real distaste to matters of mere etiquette. Such natural aversions should be respected. We want our little boys to doff their caps to ladies, and to have our girls gentle and deft in their ways; but if the male scion of the house is a born Quaker, and the girl a second edition of Miss Alcott's "Jo" we ought to make up our mind to patient endurance of their idiosyncracies until our influence and example have brought about something of the desired reform. And it will be none the slower

for our not attempting to force it. Children have so much to learn and are obliged to listen to so many admonitions that sometimes they close their weary ears to everything. Their moral nature grows while resting, and they often surprise us by beginning to do of their own accord what we have despairingly given over advising.

General advice is always useless. It is best to follow the plan of Fröbel and inculcate the lesson at the time it is needed, by an appropriate anecdote or practical illustration, and let the moral have reference to past conduct. Or, better still, let the child puzzle out the moral for himself and explain it to you. In the delight of driving home the fault of an imaginary person a child learns speedily to form a distaste for the fault itself. As Hoare says: "If we desire to perform our duty toward our children it is not to their outward conduct but to the heart that we must direct our chief attention."

The most difficult position is that of a parent who has begun wrong, and attempts at length to introduce a reform into the

nursery. Particularly if he has been lax and careless and suddenly resolves to take the reins. Haste and severity are ruinous measures. Everything should be done gradually and gently, and "One must be prepared for a lengthened trial of patience with children who have been wrongly dealt with," as a great writer observes: "Seeing that that which is not easy where a right state of feeling has been established from the beginning becomes doubly difficult when a wrong state of feeling has set in."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PRE-NATAL INFLUENCES AND THE FIRST DAYS OF LIFE.

“Deformities of character in the pupil should be traced back to their origin. Only by comprehending the historic growth of an organic defect are we able to prescribe the best remedies. Such deformities are often symptoms of deeper evils.”—ROSENKRANZ.

Men and women in whom the parental instinct is strong enough to subdue transient impulses for the benefit of their offspring can furnish an impetus in the right direction to the souls of their unborn children. But while people are continually warned to “prepare for death,” that thing which no preparation serves to deprive of its awful, immutable character, seldom is there any allusion made to the duty which is even more manifest and far more natural, prepare for birth. A mother’s preparation for the coming of

her child usually consists in making a "layette." Perhaps into the tiny garments, as they grow beneath her fingers, she sews some tender, maternal fancies, some broodings, reflections, and hopes upon the young life soon to be ushered into this world. Well for the child if this is so; if there is affection and contentment in the mother's heart. "The child," warns Michelet, "should not come before the cradle is prepared for him," meaning, not that article of rose-wood and lace which stands in the corner of the chamber donated to the child who is to be "born with a silver spoon in its mouth," but the invisible home of the spirit created in the mother's mind. In his mystical, sentimental way the kindly French philosopher talks of "moral incubation" where the man imbues the mind of his wife with great ideas and leads her upward from the commonplace to the higher realm of thought and feeling. Women must always read this with a sad and skeptical smile. Men are not wont either to feel or to assume this responsibility. The feminine mind which aspires to ideals

above the sordid matters of every day, usually dreams and hopes alone, knowing that to confide such visions would bring ridicule and impatience from the "partner of her sorrows and joys." Yet it is a beautiful ideal, never relinquished without sorrow, and the women who see in "L'Amour" much nonsense and impracticality, will forgive Michelet for all for the sake of the exquisite grace of this one chapter.

If they cannot depend upon their husbands to be guide and companion in the pursuit of this high duty, how shall women fulfill it? Alone, if it must be. This is not the place to dwell upon those strange, sad, spiritual "incompatibilities" which are the ruin of so many ideals of happiness. "Then," sings Tennyson, "reign the world's great bridals, chaste and fair." But the world must wait awhile for its ideal race. That comes only through complete union between the parents, when love will mean a companionship absolutely inseparable, of life, mind, and spirit. In the midst of the practical solicitations of our pitifully commonplace living, and

the "dragging-down cares" that beset us every hour, something still may be done for our coming children, if we wish it. We need not limit our preparation to material things, but give some attention to influencing, by means of our own occupations and thoughts, the character which will one day give us the greatest concern. This power is, withal, limited by the law of inheritance, which makes parents only agents for the transmission of certain fixed qualities. Emerson would have the grandparents of the child undergo the preliminary education, which would certainly not be amiss, if it were possible. Ourselves, as future grandparents, we may control, yet there is, even here, a fatalism in our movements. How frequently people find themselves doing and saying precisely that which they had resolved not to do and say, as if some impulse overruled their judgment and intention. This is the momentum of all the past bearing down our individually acquired ideas. Yet we, in turn, help to roll up the momentum of a future period, and every victory of ours of reason and conscience over impulse

make stronger and more positive the moral nature of our offspring. So the responsibility of a parent begins long before there is a tangible, living fact before him in the shape of a baby. What the man is at the time when, most unrecking his awful power, he indulges, perhaps, some momentary caprice, he imparts to his child. And the whims of the mother, her habits, and her desires, have an influence which it is impossible to estimate but whose effects can often be traced, even by the least reflective parent. Scientists differ greatly in their judgment of the capacity for mental assimilation possessed by the foetal organism. That it is affected by such sentiments as fear, anger, and joy, is on all sides admitted, and while withholding coincidence with such extreme views as those advanced by some enthusiasts, that through the fluid in which the foetus floats is transmitted every impression made upon the mothers, there can be no objection to the statement that all the mental and physical faculties of the child, while not alterable in their primary nature, by any intention or action

on the mother's part, are subject to considerable modification. Such an astute observer as Schopenhauer warns us that the mysterious element he calls the "genius of the genus" has a certain will-power before it has actually entered into what we call life. Perez appears to endow it with a faculty that seems like conscious selection, the power of taking up some mental aliment and rejecting other. By this aptitude for selection may be meant nothing more than the propensity possessed also by the lowest species of plant to appropriate what is necessary to its existence: or, it may be that germ of tendency, the outcome of all the united ancestral proclivities, which, now latent, is to constitute, when developed, the individuality of the child.

In so slight a treatise as this it is the aim to exclude everything of a theoretical nature, and it is sufficient for the purpose to admit that the action of the outward world in the impression thereby made upon the mother has a distinct effect upon the child, beneficial and adverse. But as positive opposed to negative is the supe-

rior potency of a mother's *acts* over her *sensations*. The habit which prevails among the ignorant of humoring all the mother's passing whims, lest an ungratified desire should "mark" the child is a remnant of barbaric superstition. Self-indulgence does indeed "mark" it by the transmission of the tendency, and a mother who requires everything to give way to her and selfishly arrogates every attention will probably give birth to a child with a decided bias toward selfishness. Proper self-control of impulses and appetites, the maintenance of a rational, equable tone of mind, and the cultivation in herself of such qualities as she would prefer to have her offspring possess, should be the rule for the pregnant woman. Healthful occupation, never carried to the point of fatigue, cheerful recreation, by giving her something to think about, is far preferable to idleness. So far as one may choose there ought to be a cheerful, pleasant environment, the society of sympathetic friends who are not sentimentally lugubrious! Excitement and worry ought to be removed far from her, and particu-

larly solicitude concerning both her family and her affairs should not be permitted to intrude upon her thoughts. Yet it is not desirable for her to shut herself away from contact with suffering to the extent of shunning the performance of duties. Some women are peculiarly sensitive and sympathetic at this time, and it is noticeable that their offspring are apt to be remarkable for the absence of that thoughtless cruelty common to many children. Moral faculties are, it is said, transmitted from the father and mental faculties from the mother. But no such invariable rule can be admitted. So far as pre-natal influences can be traced, character is inherited quite as much from the maternal as from the paternal side, with perhaps a preponderance in favor of the former, since her influence is direct and that of the father, in all of that long period of gestation when the foetus is registering impressions, —indirect, acting through her.

The education of the coming child constitutes too large a field of discussion to be more than glanced at here. But, in general, it may be said that the conscien-

tious and wisely-directed efforts of the mother are not only effective in influencing beneficially the character of her offspring, but also in establishing such intimate and sympathetic relations with the child as will be of the greatest assistance in governing him. There are remarkable natural attachments and antagonisms, disregarded by the stolid and unimaginative, but of interest to people who desire to understand from the scientific basis, the origin of qualities.

There is on record the case of a child, born healthy and normal in all respects, who evinced from the first such an obstinate aversion for his own mother, that, although there existed in the opinion of physician and attendants no reason for it, he refused to suckle her, and went five days without food, when it was supplied to him from a bottle. But he died at the age of two months, presumably from the effects to his constitution of this willful starvation. The relations between the parents of this child had been singularly unhappy, and the mother had none of the maternal instinct in her nature.

A nursling has much more fondness for its mother than a child who is denied, either from intention or incapacity, this natural sustenance. And although we must adopt Sully's appellation to this sort of fondness, of "cupboard love," there grows out of it a more elevated feeling; a familiar tenderness that otherwise is not nearly so apt to exist.

Our real and deliberate legislation begins with the day of birth. But who thinks of it then? While the infant is like the tender petals of a rose, almost ethereal in its delicacy, grown people hold their breath in looking at it, fearful lest their utmost tenderness should not be gentle enough. They forget themselves, and do not give an instant's thought to their own peace and comfort so long as the tiny mortal continues frail and helpless. The young mother and the experienced nurse are alike in their anxiety, although it proceeds in them from different causes, the desire of the one being to promote the well-being of the child, so far as she knows how, and the other is usually instigated by the wish to secure

peace and quiet, at all hazards, for her patient. The old practice of dosing babies with catnip, soothing-syrups, and paregoric has now happily become almost obsolete in intelligent communities, and yet it is singular how many absurd notions survive and exert an influence. The mother should be well-informed, having acquainted herself beforehand with the necessary information from books and from the advice of her physician, who, it is to be hoped, will be possessed of both the scientific knowledge and the humanity to enlighten her upon the most essential points. But it is unsafe to trust entirely to any one. Some physicians pay no attention to a baby after it has been brought into the world, but deliver up the little captive, bound and suffering, to the tender mercies of nurse and relatives. If there has been no wish expressed previously by the mother—the one friend who is bound to understand something of the situation of her new-born child—no stipulations made as to the kind of treatment it is to be subjected to, there may be mistakes made which a lifetime cannot undo.

One case that I can never recall without pity and indignation is where a baby, making its entrance into the world early in the dawn of an autumn day, was taken in hand by the much-lauded and trusted professional nurse, a colored "Mammy" of the old school, and after being washed, dressed, and *its head wet and hair brushed into curls*, was handed about for inspection and tortured and excited for a long time before being permitted to drop off into that deep sleep which is the first necessity of a young infant. The result of this absurd ignorance was a nervous catarrh which developed when the child was three days old and continued for years.

The first two requirements of an infant are warmth and repose. Bathing and eating should both be deferred until after that first long nap by which nature seeks to restore its exhausted vitality. I refer the reader to Perez's little work "The First Three Years of Childhood" for a vivid description of the sufferings of a newly-born child. They are greatly aggravated by the ignorance and thoughtless-

ness of attendants, and there is no doubt that the foundation of much subsequent temper and impatience is laid in these early and unhappy days. I borrow a suggestion from a little treatise of an experienced obstetrician called "The First Hours of Life," to the effect that instead of the usual foolish, inopportune toilet an infant should, on its entrance into the world, be received in an apron of the softest stuff, and at once be laid upon a bed of cotton-batting, which should be packed about him so as to exclude the currents of air which even in summer weather are icy to his shrinking, shivering little body. Here he should be allowed to repose until he wakes, when he may be taken up, washed, and dressed as simply and speedily as possible, and then placed upon his mother's breast to regain there something of the impression of that tender environment from which he has been rudely and hastily torn. What handling can be delicate enough, what voice low enough to temper itself to the needs of these sensitive nerves against which the touch and sounds of the outer world jar with awful torments?

Alas, that the first day of life should so often be made an accumulation of horrors ! And they leave their evil effects, too, in weakened constitutions, in ruined dispositions, in bad habits *taught* by injudicious guardians, and that will henceforth occasion many a warfare in which the innocent party is sure to suffer most.

One such instance is of a nurse, supposed to be an exceptionally intelligent woman, putting the thumb of a baby a day old, into its mouth, to stop its crying, with the sage remark "a baby that will suck its thumb is always a good baby." The baby sucked its thumb, and continued thereafter to do so, notwithstanding every effort made to break up the habit, until he was eight years old ! Moreover, out of this grew up other offensive ways, one of which was a desire to continually have something in his mouth, a craving which was instinctive and unconquerable. Was the child to blame ? But in all the subsequent years when he was corrected for obstinate persistence in these unpleasant habits, who pardoned him, and recollected the nurse ?

It cannot be too urgently represented that *right treatment the first week* is of the utmost importance in rearing a child. The foundation of good character is laid in health; and bodily comfort, a careful adjustment to his novel and startling surrounds is indispensable in bringing this about. The vanity and ostentation of the parent which enjoins elaborate toilets and permits visitors to handle the baby, ought to be overcome by a sincere wish to secure to the helpless one quiet and peace. No one can so well understand the baby as its mother, if she is permitted to exercise that tender solicitude nature has endowed her with, and is freed from the well-meant interference of the friends and advisers who cluster about the cradle with speculative eyes, and bristle with recipes and hobbies the tithe of which, if received, would bring every infant to an untimely grave.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE MENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN MUST BE CONSIDERED.

“In infancy the brain, being soft and warm, is easily impressed, and as it hardens these impressions are retained.” FENELON.

A WISE writer says: “Patience is the first lesson to teach a young child; it should be taught to *wait*. Don’t give a baby what it wants *while it cries*; calm it tenderly, and then promptly supply its wants, so that it will come to associate peace and quiet with its enjoyments.”

The practice which obtains with some nurses, of thrusting a bottle of milk into a crying infant’s mouth, or putting it hastily to the mother’s breast while it is excited and fretted, is very likely to induce impatience. At the same time, an infant should not be kept waiting unnecessarily and unreasonably. Hunger is an

exigent instinct, and its demands ought to be satisfied, but with judgment. It is surprising that among educated people the practice continues of "stuffing" babies, of offering food as the panacea for all discomforts. This is to convert an intelligent human being into a mere appetite, inviting and encouraging its sensual nature into prominence. Babies should be fed regularly, *by the clock*, when they are awake, through the day-time, and only twice at most, during the night, until the age of six months, when a healthy, well-trained child will sleep the night through, going probably from eight till five or six without feeling any desire for food. Of course there is a great difference in this respect among infants, as in all respects ; yet some rules are of general application, and the study of some little treatise on the hygienic treatment of infants ought to be part of every mother's preparation for her duties.

Usually a baby cries from a sense of discomfort which ought to be remedied for him. The cause of his fretting ought always to be ascertained, with-

out delay, but if it is certain that he is merely willful, the proper plan is to let him alone until he is convinced of the futility of rebellion. Great care must be exercised, and the cry of pain distinguished from the cry of temper. Babies suffer a great deal during the first two years, and especially when they begin to cut their teeth. Life then becomes one restless, feverish want, the desire is constant to allay the itching pain, and they cast about in their helpless way, for some substance which possesses just the right qualities to meet their necessities. Happy the baby who at this juncture is surrounded by the judicious care of an intelligent mother, who realizes its needs, both physical and mental, and who, without spoiling, can give that sympathy and petting which is like the breath of life to sensitive children. It is a great gift to be able to *interpret* a child's inarticulate murmurs. And this is where science comes in to supplement with its definite knowledge the fallible ideas coming down to us from tradition. It is something to know that

there is a *baby language*, that infants and animals commonly understand each other better than grown persons can understand either. Inflections and gestures are the language that precedes words. The expressions that rapidly chase each other over a baby's mobile face, as it watches for the first time a lighted candle, or handles with vague, uncertain touch, a worsted ball, are full of dawning emotions that are to be translated presently into ideas, which, nevertheless, it cannot express unless we are ready to comprehend its wordless talk. We are too neglectful of our children's intellects while they are still in the cradle. The great advantage of training them thus early through the use of their sense-perceptions is one of the most earnest doctrines of Fröbel, whose system does not embrace as is supposed by many, only the teaching carried on in the kindergarten, but that more important teaching of the mother in the home nursery, where, hanging over the cradle, she studies the awakening intelligence of her child and seizes the right moment to satisfy, by supplying some ap-

properiate object, its desire to investigate. The room where an infant lies, however plain, must be like a great, glittering fair, where forms and colors melt into an undistinguishable mass. It fixes its eyes on some bright object and stares intently ; stretches out its hands to grasp, and is disappointed ; and through this comes the first idea of space, of distance. But disappointment is the law of life to this helpless little creature, unable to reach the objects of its desire. And how seldom it is helped. When we will bear in mind that babies need something to interest them, something to satisfy their mental craving, which is imperative, they will be better-tempered and more of a comfort to themselves and other people.

Our little ones ought to be the subjects of a care as vigilant as we can give, but it should be silent and watchful, not effusive. I was the pleased witness the other day, in a train, of the gambols of a fourteen months' old baby girl. There was no attitude, save standing on her head, which she did not take within the space of ten minutes. With her mother's

arm about her, simply to protect, not to restrain, she climbed about the seat, twisted, writhed, flung out arms and legs and head, and frolicked to her heart's content. The mother was meanwhile talking to a friend on the opposite seat, unconcerned by the little one's incessant activity, although her arms must have ached. The baby's face was full of character and sweetness, and she seemed to have an excessive fondness for her mother, flinging herself back into her arms every few minutes and laughingly trying to pat her face. When she was tired of play she nestled her head down on that patient mother's arm and rested quietly. Almost any nurse would have been incessantly admonishing and cajoling and threatening a baby of this active disposition, and thereby have excited fretfulness. Few, even among mothers, would have endured to be the subject of amused observation on the part of all the other persons in the car. I deemed her, in my heart, a wise woman, who valued the welfare of her child more than the opinion of the world. It is generally easier to sacrifice one's ease

and comfort than to endure the consequences of going contrary to common usage. And the common usage is to make automatons of children in public. Their innocent, unconventional questions are hushed, their curiosity about new scenes and objects suppressed, for fear of exciting remark or offending some prejudice. Now, it is inevitable that the activity of a child should have vent; if quenched in one direction it will break out in another. If natural, innocent curiosity is denied expression there will be the fretfulness of a disappointed faculty. There is no doubt but that a large part of the naughtiness of children does not begin as naughtiness, but is converted into it by injudicious treatment. We have no just conception of how constantly we balk their harmless wishes. Who can estimate the grief and wrath that swells a baby's breast when he is snatched without warning from a fascinating play in the sand, or even mud, whither he has crept while his guardians are looking elsewhere? Yesterday I saw a toddling mite, in the outskirts of the city, stamping with his feet

some clay on the path, and making, perhaps, fairy figures, full of poetic fancies; happy, dirty, and engaged in learning, in his own way, something that vastly interested him. His brothers and sisters were playing also in the garden, when one of them, suddenly noticing the baby's occupation, jerked him about with a harsh re-proof, and carried him off to a distance, from no sensible motive, surely, since he was already as dirty as he could get, but apparently following that thoughtless habit, indulged in by grown people, of treating little ones as automatons, twitted here and there, and kept in certain positions, without regard to their own wishes.

If refined parents object to their children's playing in mud—as they will, of course—let them provide clay and sand, spread on boards, put aprons on their babies, give them toy shovels, and let them be happy within reasonable bounds. The point is not so much the permitting some one occupation on which a child has set his heart, as the taking care not to thwart unnecessarily his natural impulses. Much of the naughtiness of our children

comes from the artificial lives we make them lead. We substitute our own mature, educated tastes for their simple, infantile ideas, and so force them too early away from childhood. We make them skip many of the stages in the natural order of evolution between infancy and maturity. And very often, if we were suddenly confronted in the midst of some difficulties with our children, by the stern inquiry into motive, we should be confounded to find out that we are correcting them not nearly so much for being *bad* as for not being what we *prefer to have them*.

Nature is a much better teacher than the most careful parent, for she teaches what *must* be learned: that which is essential to living. And one of her earliest lessons is patience. Animals possess this trait; and infants have it until they are educated out of it. Modern civilization, with its roar of machinery, its terrible wearing competitions, and over mental stimulations, brings disease to the nerves of the majority of men and women. They are impatient because they want things

to move faster—faster. In their households women often move about frantically, rushing up and downstairs, speaking hurriedly, and giving themselves no time to reflect or to study the laws of that life they abuse.

It is no wonder they imbue their babies with the spirit of impatience. It is expressed in their own movements, voices, and faces, and infants imitate it. Nothing is more contagious than discontent, and when children feel in the atmosphere a want of cheerfulness they become cross and fretful themselves. The first impression a baby ought to receive is that of *peace*. Let him feel that he has entered a realm of order and serenity, where all claims receive attention in their turn. Young and inexperienced mothers are apt to experiment too much; they try the effect of this and of that, and their zeal allows no intervals of that judicious letting alone that is necessary for the healthy growth of the little ones. Babies are very differently constituted in this regard, but I have never seen a baby so placid but that it could be trained into

habits of fretting by being constantly "fussed over" and waited upon. It is often observed that the children of decent poor people, who are left to themselves for long hours while their parents are at work, are docile and patient. They have learned to submit to the inevitable, to realize that there are other claims before which theirs must, for the time being, give way. And, other things being equal, this is a primary good, for the time comes to all when duty lies not in action but in patient waiting upon circumstances, and happy, then, is he who can wait with ease. "If," said Sir Isaac Newton, "I in any way excel other men, it is in the power of patient thought."

But it is not right to "try" the endurance of our little ones for the sake of experiment. There should be just so much denial as is necessary, and no more. The mother who makes her baby the tyrant of the house, invading with his personality every room in it, driving the father to his "den" for refuge, and tiring relatives and friends with the reiterations of her solicitudes, is not more wrong than

the mother who, making quiet the great object of life, suppresses her child's restlessness by inattention, and calmly goes her way regardless of his wants. Restlessness should not be mistaken for fretfulness, as it sometimes is, for while the latter must be dealt with as a fault, the former is an indication of uneasiness, either mental or physical. Children are, in a sense, prisoners, and during the first two years they endure probably more hardship in the way of denial than any parent would willingly inflict if he fully comprehended their position. It is not so much that there are restraints, for it is proper that there should be, but that the restraints are artificial: related, not to that natural order of development of which we have spoken, but to the conventional idea of making children dainty toys, "prettily-behaved" creatures shining with a surface polish, and smooth to the touch, however rough and inharmonious within. We fail, and deserve to fail, in rearing our children creditably, while we make "behavior" and not virtue, the object of our training. There could

be no greater proof of the sublime truth and beauty of that instinct which expresses itself in the religious feeling, than that persons in whom this instinct is strong and unperverted, exert a deep and permanent influence over children. It is not creed, formulas, and ceremonies, not prayers, not exhortings, which arouse their reverence and sympathy, but the exhibition of the spirit of faith, of enthusiastic love for the "eternal verities" which lifts all hearts capable of pure emotion into that region where virtue and innocence dwell. So unerring is a child's instinct that I doubt whether all the paraphernalia of a cathedral could impress him so deeply as the fall of a simple word—the fleeting gleam of a beauteously holy feeling mirrored in the eyes of a gentle teacher, and which reveals in an instant to his delicate sensibilities the existence of a soul deserving his love and trust. A child is the true idealist; something of the grace of that concordant movement which underlies all the springs of our outward life, reveals itself to him, and it is through our understanding of this

poetic susceptibility that we gain the power to minister to the needs of his moral nature. A formalist is merely a ridiculous object to a child; he sees through the posturing and despises without comprehending, the hypocrisy. All our little, half-conscious pretenses greatly lower us in these pure, far-seeing eyes; but a breath of skepticism, of that contemptuous disbelief in virtue and truth which abounds at table and hearth, and is the outcome of hard, embittering experience, is a withering pestilence to a child's heart. Let him believe and trust, let him retain his faith in human nature, and accredit goodness to his companions as long as he can. The less the child knows of evil the safer he is, for we find what we look for.

So worldliness, even in the smaller measure of observance of the little details of etiquette and dress, ought to be resolutely kept in the background of a child's thoughts. He should be taught to please, not that he may attract, but from the higher motive of doing good. How much more delightful is the child who springs

up voluntarily to bring a glass of water to a weary guest, even though he blunderingly spills it, than the "little lady" who sits gracefully and docilely on her chair, in a trained attitude, and with all her native spontaneity lost in "manner." But these are matters that depend on the parents' inner sense. They who sacrifice to Moloch will offer up their children's characters, and think they are doing their duty to the world. The children are the sufferers, and they revenge themselves on the next generation. The vacuity that is like a disease among a certain class results from the suppression of natural activities in their forefathers. Patience—the patience that is so laudable and useful—is not *passiveness*, but the conscious deferring of gratification. To prevent that indefinite deferring of hope which, as the proverb says, "maketh the heart sick," there must be a certain dwelling of the mind on other things, nearer, and which supply the place, temporarily, of the thing desired. To make clear the application of this principle to children, I would say that they should never be condemned, if it

can be avoided, to wait for something an indefinite time. They should be shown that what we intend to give them is coming, that we do not wish to torment them but merely that they are subject to the law of necessity.

What makes the difference between the baby who screams and kicks while his milk is being prepared and the one who, equally hungry, "coos" and stretches out eagerly but has strength of mind to wait his time? Without doubt the difference in the ways of his guardians. A gentle and deliberate manner has great influence with a peevish child. A noisy, bustling activity, accompanied as it often is by many loud reassurances and promises, has a bad effect. There are people who say that babies yell from "sheer natural depravity," but I cannot help saying that the depravity of the child is only the foolishness of the parent. Nervous parents, to whom an infant's shrill cry is like the prick of a pin, will make unreasonable exertions to sooth it into quiet. They will supply it with such counter-excitements as jumping, walking the floor with

it, and attracting its attention by uncouth noises. This is something like the practice of the savage "medicine men" who endeavor to cure their patients by beating iron pans.

I have witnessed scenes where parents, grandparents, and nurse, have vied with each other in creating confusion, blowing horns, springing rattles, singing, playing frog, and dancing, before the outraged eyes and ears of a fretting baby, who, after an amazed stare, would throw himself back after each successive performance, with a fresh fit of crying! Common sense would have dictated that when a child's nerves are in an irritable condition, what he needs is not noise and amusement, but rest. A glare of light, particularly gas-light, is decidedly injurious. Sometimes a change of scene, the taking a child, well wrapped up, into another room, a little cooler and darker, will exert a beneficial effect. If there is reason to suspect some physical ailment that a warm bath will relieve, that should be tried, even if the extra service is troublesome and unusual. Babies must be treated, in

a measure, like patients, for nearly all their tempers arise from physical discomfort and the impossibility of making themselves understood. And the rest must be considered due to injudicious management. There is too much variability and uncertainty in the nursery, and too little consideration given to the fact that no indulgence should be begun which cannot be continued. The youngest child is able to appreciate consistency. The second week he cries for exactly the same treatment he received during the first. There is something of cruelty in petting and adoring the new-comer while he is a novelty, and then relapsing into comparative indifference. The first baby in a family is a comic opera, and all view and applaud him; rush to wait upon him until it becomes tiresome and then, without any regard to the effect upon his feelings, they begin trying to undo this spoiling, causing unnecessary suffering to the child and to themselves. All the while it was being made the prime object of consideration that wonderful little brain was learning to take account of its surroundings and to

occupy the place yielded to it, so that, by the time its guardians awakened to a sense of its identity, it had discovered that its cry is the powerful lever that moves the world.

Even we hardened citizens of the world know how forcible is a first impression. With us reason modifies and corrects it. But infants do not reason; they merely perceive things in immediate relations. The first effect of a cause they conjoin to it, and thereafter the two make an idea. If they cry vehemently and get instantly what they want, while a more moderate grumbling does not bring it, they learn to attract notice by screaming. No reproach can attach to such manifestly natural conduct. Herein one perceives how necessary it is that the nurse, or whoever has the management of the child during the first few weeks, should have a wisdom beyond the mere knowing how to bathe and dress him. She should understand that her actions now have much more than a temporary importance and that carelessness or ignorance will be fatal. How few persons are able to weigh

well the consequences of their conduct at this period. Commonly, everything is sacrificed to the *nearest good*: the future is left to take care of itself. It is singular that when a baby cries the first thought ordinarily is—not what is the meaning of the cry, what does he need, but—how to *hush* him. If it breaks out in the middle of the night, he will be rocked, walked up and down, or some attempt made to amuse him, thus establishing a precedent, unhappy for all parties. Or perhaps he will be treated roughly by a tired, irritated parent who cannot “see the sense of the child’s making a racket.”

In truth, no child “makes a racket” until it has been taught to do so either by neglect or over-indulgence. We must recollect that a certain amount of crying is necessary to young children. It helps them to bear discomfort, and is the natural outlet to their feelings. But babies can be trained to cry softly. They will never learn to be violent if they are treated with calm kindness. “Those children only learn to carry their point by noisy and violent demonstration who find, by

long experience, that such measures are usually successful. A child even who has become accustomed to them will soon drop them if he finds, owing to a change of management, that they will never succeed."

I incline to think, however, that this last sentence is somewhat too sanguine. It is not easy to undo the effects of bad management, particularly if the attempt is made under the old existing conditions. Some parents think they have only to say to a child, " You are not going to be spoiled any longer ; I am going to turn over a new leaf with you now, and you must behave." What impression does this vague threat convey to a child's mind ? None. Or, at most, merely that his parent, being cross, wants to make an alteration somewhere, without exactly knowing where, or how to do it. In many instances this is the truth. For, as most unfortunately often happens, the parent finds it impossible to change his own habits and live up to his reformed plan, so that, as it proves, his words have been mere windy gusts, having no result save

that of creating a certain distrust of his intentions.

Abbott wisely cautions: "If children have become insubordinate, do not expect sudden reformation, and do not warn them that a change of management is coming; let it come gradually and gently." But this pre-supposes unusual self-command in the parents, and those parents whose management has been faulty of course have little faculty of self-command. It is harder to reform parents than children. Sometimes sending a rebellious child away with a judicious relative or friend, for a short time, effects a most beneficial change. Amid entirely new scenes, and with the old associations gone, he learns to submit himself to new regulations, and if upon his return home he finds that a wiser government obtains than existed before, it seems more natural and agreeable than if the change came as a sudden surprise.

Just here, however, it may be well to observe that *surprise* is an element in wise training. The sudden substituting new objects of attention, and new methods of correction is of use, particularly with a

lively, imaginative child. Such an one usually gives trouble, partly from his tendency to tire readily of accustomed things, and to be subject to *ennui* when restrained. This disease of childhood is generally ignored, but it is very real, and unpleasant. Isolation and enforced quiet aggravate the disorder, which demands the corrective of agreeable activity and of companionship. It is not good for children to be much alone, nor to be chiefly with grown persons. There is almost sure to be thus developed precocity of intellect at the expense of character. It is wise for a parent to mingle with the sports of her child, but permit him to bring in other children. She may then watch him to the best advantage, and without interfering with his harmless sports. There are some persons who merely play with children to amuse themselves, to pass a chance idle hour, and having no sense of moral responsibility, they "draw out," the little one's oddities and then laugh at them. From such tormentors there ought to be protection. Nothing is more reprehensible than the

practice of teasing children. It does not make them less sensitive or more reasonable, and it does spoil their tempers completely. An old Eastern proverb says: "It is dangerous to jest with children." They take everything literally and think us deliberately unkind. The inevitable has lessons enough for them if we do not interfere, and all our training should tend toward strengthening their moral character without blunting their sensibilities.

It is for their good, not that parents may be quiet and comfortable, that children should be trained to patience. It is the first step of that self-government they should begin to exercise as early as possible. Many children in poor homes bear early the heavy burdens which crush all the romance out of their lives and to them endurance means ceaseless pain with no rainbow of promise in the beyond. And yet, even out of these hard conditions, emerge sometimes the heroes of the world. But the risk is not one to be chosen. In teaching our children fortitude we want to make use of those happenings which constantly present themselves, ready to

be turned to the right account. Let them be bright and merry and get all the fun they can, for good-humor comes of healthful activity, and without this self-control is impossible. When they have come to be able to acquiesce in what they do not like because it is best, and to please those they love, they have attained to a height of moral power that never could have been climbed had we made the matter one of coercion, and forcibly led them along each step.

I have in mind at this moment a little boy, not a dozen years old, whose fine mind is constantly hampered in its activity by his frail health. He has repeatedly been taken from school, and his ambitious efforts baulked, but his hopefulness never fails, and he is buoyant and light-hearted in all the enforced intervals of the work he loves, with a cheerful acquiescence in present deprivation and confidence in the future.

This power of waiting for the good momentarily denied is the basis of fine character. It is a sort of spiritual flexibility that, like finger flexibility, must be

developed early in life. And its presence then is most charming because unexpected. What pleasure is imparted to a company by the entrance of a little one whose behavior is dictated by a well-balanced sense of the rights of other people and of his own. He is neither bashful nor forward. He accepts notice contentedly, and if it is delayed he can wait.

The only way of imbuing our children with feelings of consideration for others is by treating them sympathetically. They learn the rights of other people through having their own respected. Has not every one observed how, in their play of "school" and their "mothering" plays, they imitate the management they have received? Go among the poorer and more ignorant classes and you will find on the door-step a mere baby with threatening brow and stick upraised to beat her companions, all in play. As Richter says: "Among the people the blows of fate on the parents usually beget, as in a stormy sky, retaliating blows on the children." And they pass it on—if only to their cat or their doll.

We must enter into the feelings of our children and divine the moment when good impulses are at work. As they grow older put it into their power to exercise the grace of concession. Few children will refuse if they are left to their own option. For there is a native sweetness about childhood that makes a certain serious, gentle patience the quaint expression of their love for the elders who understand them and labor for their welfare.

## CHAPTER X.

### DEALING WITH LITTLE FAULTS.

“Don’t aim at controlling every detail of a child’s life ; leave him liberty in small things.”—*Spencer.*

WHILE children are small, during, probably, the first dozen years of their lives, they must feel that there is an authority vested in their parents which is incontestable. And that this may be accomplished it is absolutely essential that the parents shall have from the beginning a clear idea of what they want, and the way to attain it. Many parents live in this respect “from hand to mouth,” not knowing from one day to another what their requirements will be, and leaving to chance the unfolding of the young natures which ought to be trained and tended with the nicest prevision of consequences. Of late years, since the scientific study of

human nature has begun to receive some attention, there has grown up among educators, a sense of the importance of understanding the laws of development and of adjusting their instructions accordingly. But this knowledge is as yet confined to the small class of earnest, thoughtful people who make the education of the young an art as well as a profession. Few parents interpret their responsibilities so broadly as to feel it incumbent upon themselves to understand physiology, and mental and moral science in its application to the training of their children. Yet only through such knowledge can there be made out a plan, a formula, conformity to which shall save us from that "hap-hazard" government that obtains in ill-regulated households. Parenthood is already looked upon by the more advanced minds as a profession : the time must come when its duties will be reduced to an exact science, ignorance of which will be inexcusable ; as it is even now deplorable. But the march of science has always encountered at every turn the dead wall of prejudice, which in

this place takes the form of that vast self-love that makes a parent consider his children but an exterior portion of his own personality, and as long as this idea has firm hold in his mind he cannot comprehend his obligations, nor conceive that he is but the connecting link between his child and society, and that his duty is to protect and educate, not to re-create. When a child is born there already exists within him the germ of all he is to be. Nothing can be added or taken away. "I," said the tiny philosopher when questioned, "am the thing that makes a man!"

The great object of government, then, is the evolution of the individual; the gradually lifting a child out of his position of helplessness and dependence into the position of self-sustaining manhood or womanhood. The same law ruling the culture of all species of plants and animals is applicable to child-culture. The suppression of undesirable traits comes about chiefly through the strengthening desirable traits, thus diverting energy from activities that are hurtful to such as

are beneficial. How much friction would be done away with if this simple rule—the law of evolution in a word—were but constantly borne in mind!

Self-will,—the persistency in some sort of action that has been begun—is usually more or less mechanical. The child continues what he has not power to stop doing simply because his will is weak, and his impulse masters it. Unreason is but a lesser insanity, and the way to deal with it is by exercising the magnetism which a sane mind, keeping itself calm and cool, can always exert. A serene, cheerful person, an embodiment of reserved power, has no difficulty in controlling angry children, because he presents to their minds the appearance of something more agreeable than anger, thus arousing their desire to emulate, and this desire, opposing itself to the impulse of anger, weakens the force of that emotion.

This should suggest the propriety of strengthening the child's will, which is the power of voluntary choice, by so investing right actions with delightful associations, that he will choose them of his

own accord. Thus he will learn to overcome for himself the temptation toward acts essentially evil, because they will bring less pleasure than acts of a higher character. This impression must of course be aided by the association of pain and discomfort with wrong-doing. But as far as possible the pain ought to seem *intrinsic* to the act. A parental command should seem to have reason in it, and disobedience should bring discomfort, because that which was prohibited was harmful in itself. The ordinary custom is to offset the attractions of self-will by making merely the disobedience painful, and while this may serve as a deterrent for the time being, while the child is under authority, it misses the real point, which is to teach him that a certain sort of conduct is bad. Not infrequently one hears the muttered threat of a child, baffled in the instant of desire by the harsh force of an arbitrary command. "Wait till I am grown up—won't I do it then!" And very probably he does. Of what use, in such a case, has been his youthful education? Merely to suppress,

for the comfort of his family, tendencies that break out in after life to bring discomfort to a whole community.

Obedience has no reason for being except where a command is justifiable. In cases where there is no equitable impediment to a child's taking his own way, he ought not to be prevented merely to educate him in submission—that is to gratify the self-love of parents. How much more just and kind it is to make obedience attractive, not so much by the offer of gifts and rewards, although they have their uses, as by taking away some of its preventive character and making it apparently spontaneous. It could be done, just as morality is rendered attractive to us, by presenting it as an impulse of one's higher nature. Every emotional prompting toward virtuous action should receive prompt encouragement, and the more a child can be got to feel that in such acts he is doing what he wants to do, the greater is his inclination toward them. A deliberate wrong act would then have added to the parent's prohibition the reinforcement of the child's own self-disap-

proval. And the habit of associating disobedience with discomfort would be formed without any unpleasant association with the parent. It of course takes a tender conscience—one that has never been reproof-hardened—to feel in this way. Sympathetic relations must exist between parent and child before the lesser will is brought into harmony with the larger one. But this harmony is the goal of our efforts, and no pains must be spared to secure it. The interchange of good offices promotes such an understanding. Let a child recognize that obligations are reciprocal, that he owes kindness in return for kindness. Sympathy that does not express itself in acts is mere sentiment, useless in every way. Feeling and action are so close together in a child's mind that his impulse naturally is to do something for persons whom he is fond of. And this service, which is the direct outflowing of right feeling should not be interfered with. It will, when judiciously educated, take the form of self-sacrifice. A child is very pliable when he loves his parent. I have seen a

small boy, left to his own volition, while knowing that his mother disapproved of what he wanted to do, return, on second thoughts, after setting out in pursuance of his plan, and give it up with the most cheerful acquiescence. What a gratification to the mother! And how much more confidence she would have thereafter in her boy, since he displayed thus early an ability to reason, and choose for himself the better thing.

But even with the same training children will not display equal capacity for reasoning. Some remain babies a long time. But with an appropriate adaptation of government to their peculiar needs the most impetuous, headstrong child can be brought to control himself. An emotional nature is susceptible through its affections, and it is dangerous to attempt to influence it in any other way ; for where there is a strong capacity for love there is always, also, a strong capacity for hate, and this sentiment, commonly little suspected or taken account of as existing among the very young, has sometimes an appalling ferocity, like that of a

savage. The blind instinct of an enraged child is to annihilate: only his feebleness prevents his setting the world on fire. Does not the Apostle Paul, that stern, dogmatical man who feared nothing, and could not have been moved by the apprehension of the mere unpleasantness of consequences—caution once and again, “And you, parents, provoke not your children to wrath!” Let us cultivate affection in them, for this is the only sure and permanent hold we can have. The great object in government is to exercise our physical power of coercion as seldom as possible. There should be no terrible displays, no threats, or exhibition of implements of torment. These have the effect upon weak and timid minds of making them more vacillating and cowardly, and a bold and courageous mind is thereby aroused to a sense of resistance, through a feeling of babyish self-respect. It is both cruel and impolitic to dominate this instinct, the inheritance probably of ancestral bravery and endurance, the very qualities most admired in men and women.

Anger is but ardor perverted from its proper action. What we want is willing adhesion, not conquered submission. There is an old and true proverb which is often misinterpreted: "He who would command must first have learned to obey." But the obedience, to have had an educational value, must have been voluntary, a deference to one's own higher impulses over his lower impulses.

Do we ever make children obey our lower impulses, and praise their docility? If so, we irretrievably injure their moral nature. It is an ill lesson to inculcate the principle of yielding to superior power, whether it is right or wrong. The question may be asked at this juncture whether children are to be judges of their parents' character? The answer must be that they *will* judge, and although possessing so small a share of reason they have an intuition which enables them readily to detect guile. If we acknowledge, as the conscientious mind must, that we are only justified in commanding our children to do what is right, we must be very careful not to weaken our position by

giving orders which their own sense will tell them are erroneous. To make ourselves respected we must be and appear worthy of respect. A parent, like the judge upon the bench, the governor in his chair, ought to carry about him an atmosphere of unimpeachable integrity, and whence can this emanate but in the consciousness that back of him is the great moral law of which he is the interpreter, and that sustains all his decrees? There is no such awe-inspiring character as a person who is at once consistently just and kind. He is looked up to and his influence is unlimited. On the rare occasions that such a parent would be obliged to resort to physical restraints he could effect far greater results with less force than an impulsive person whose constant bent was toward violence. Mild, friendly expostulation is far better than severity. Coercion should be the last resort, and only used to restrain violence or an obstinate resistance to the rights of others. Where proper relations have existed from the beginning, it will probably never have to be resorted to, but in those

cases where it is necessary, let there be no hesitation and no withdrawing from the stand taken. While it is not equitable for a parent to adhere to what he perceives is a mistake—to insist upon a thing merely because he has once said so—when he knows that right and justice are on the side of his edict, he should enforce it with Roman firmness. There are times when leniency is cruel, when laxness on our part means certain future suffering to the child we excuse. We ought to represent the inevitable, and to this he must bow his head. Never deceive nor tyrannize, and assume this supreme, indisputable authority but seldom: it will be awful in proportion to its rarity. Corporal punishments should be excluded from the nursery. Parents have no right to use blows as a method of moral education. In cases where a child is obstinately rebellious he can only be regarded as a demented person, and the same remedial treatment administered which we would bestow upon the insane. Compassion, not anger, is the sentiment appropriate to the occasion. Magnanimity cows a cul-

prit ; he feels abashed and belittled in his own esteem. Let him be made aware that the public good demands his restraint: that just as a raging animal would be tied, so he must be confined to his room or his chair, and his liberty curtailed because he interferes with the liberty of other people. Can a parent trust himself, when necessity thus arises, to be stern without being harsh ? Ordinarily, dignity and sweetness are entirely compatible. Infinite patience, unfailing kindness, are the qualities to cultivate. Dr. Fellenburg, who quelled so many riotous boys, found that in all which relates to puerile faults, "mild means are the only effectual means." On the twentieth repetition of a fault the remonstrance should be as kind as the first time.

This is where parents usually fail. They do not sufficiently excuse forgetfulness and inattention. Few children are gifted with the earnest and intense conscientiousness essential to the bearing in mind every wish of the guardian. This ability is also an attribute of fine health. Disease weakens both memory and will, hence a healthy child is much easier to

manage than an ailing one. "The mind," observes Quick, "will not act during any depression of the animal spirits." This is an argument for keeping our children happy. When the body is in a morbid condition there is not present sufficient energy to make oneself do right. There is no confidence, no faith, and an effort seems not worth the while. So, a much greater degree of tact and patience are necessary in dealing with ailing children than with well ones. Yet even when sick they should not be spoiled. Never is gentle firmness more in order. I have known a child, entirely tractable until then, ruined by the injudicious treatment he received during the fretful stage of convalescence after a severe illness. He received the impression then, never afterward to be quite effaced, that his wish was the law of the household. The tenderest nursing, the most assiduous care can co-exist with the authority essential to the good of an invalid. The mother then should imitate the physician, whom no one thinks of disputing. But children without being really sick are often in a

physical state that necessitates a certain leniency on the part of their guardians. The health of grown people largely depends upon their having found out by experience what they can do and what they must avoid. They keep themselves well by judicious selection. Children are getting used to life, and every day they suffer some slight or perhaps serious inconvenience while their parents are learning just what their constitutions demand. Thus there are so many things that have to be taken into consideration in the exercise of parental government that the only way to avoid making some great mistake is to make kindness and consideration the invariable rule.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE PRIMARY OBJECT IS THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER.

"It is quite a common fault to make use of reprimands for the slightest faults which are almost inevitable to children. This breaks the force of reprimands and renders them fruitless."—ROLLIN.

SINGULARLY enough it is habitual among us to regard with dislike the trait which marks out our children as belonging to a superior race. The evolution of the civilized man from the savage is accompanied by an increased interest and curiosity concerning his surroundings. Consequently, in a race, and in individuals, the exhibition of vivid interest must be held to indicate the presence of intellectual power. Now, no one is more pleased at having pointed out evidences of intellect in his child than the parent, to whom these mental endowments seem to be

owing. The mother wears a flattered smile, the father vainly tries to hide his complacency under an air of indifference when the intelligence of their child is made the subject of remark. But there is a wish to reap the reward without having gone through with all that preliminary work which must be considered one of the penalties of pleasure. A baby at two or three months shows faculties of observation, a certain "brightness" which arouses in his friends hopes that he may become something remarkable. They pet him and play with him and teach him from time to time some little tricks that people will call "cunning," and altogether, make use of this dawning intelligence to glorify themselves in the eyes of the public, without a thought of the mental needs of the little creature and of that vacuum left by the lack of appropriate training which this monotonous little play of "showing off" by no means satisfies. Presently, when the child's mind has become tired, and in a way stultified by nonsense, and he turns his attention voluntarily to something more rational,

has *wants* and shows determination to gratify them, there is a revulsion of feeling in his guardians. They require a pet, and ceasing to be this he becomes a nuisance. They regard with high disfavor his independent exertions, and instead of assiduously studying the natural way in which the little mind unfolds, and aiding its development they hinder it, retarding its processes so much that often the "bright" baby grows into a stupid child, because he has never been allowed any intellectual freedom, and nature has been balked by all those conventional regulations which unhesitatingly sacrifice even genius to convenience.

From the day the child steps from his cradle to the floor and begins to totter about the room, he becomes the object of uneasy surveillance. This is dictated partly by a regard for his safety, but more from the desire to protect our possessions. The swaddling clothes of infancy were fetters of gauze compared to the restrictions now imposed on the eager little creature who stretches out his hands to touch (and so gain the only knowledge

open to him) all the strange and beautiful things in his new world. The children of the wealthy now suffer more than those of the poor. Rousseau speaks of the torture these children experience in the very embarrassment of riches displayed to their sight, but which they are never allowed to handle and analyze. In the cottage or the farm-house the baby is much more at ease, playing with some clothes-pins and a tin-pail, whose shining surface is ever a new surprise, and sitting on the sand in front of the door, learning from the use of the primitive element lessons suited to his understanding. Simplicity is restful, and a few flowers and grasses, pine cones, shells, and soft, bright balls, are welcome treasures that furnish both amusement and instruction. Every mother cannot be a kindergartener—which is a great pity—but every mother ought at least to obtain some simple manual, and learn the use of the Fröbel gifts and songs. The ball is the child's first natural toy, and one hung above his cradle just where he can touch and swing it is sure to give him great enjoyment. It ought to be

bright and soft to the touch, so that he can learn little by little, the qualities of this spherical body, and the mother ought to make it her duty, however busy, to watch at times and assist in the play of the little one with a view to teaching him, for the desire to play which nature implants as an instinct in the young is the first method of physical and intellectual development, and pastimes soon pall upon them unless they contain scope for some sort of activity.

At the instant when the baby is introduced to the environment that commonly is his heritage in refined homes, we ought to stop and ask ourselves the scope and purpose of the certain warfare now to be waged between the little one, moved solely by natural instincts, and other people, controlled by all the complex and contradictory motives of civilized life. Is there sufficient reason in our preference, for bewildering this new-born intelligence by numerous frail and costly surroundings, and thwarting its laudable curiosity by constant protest and restraint when he toddles forth to investigate?

I have seen a mother who made essay toward culture, and whose taste ran riot upon the subject of bric-a-brac, pursuing her two-year-old around the parlor with a perpetual "No, no, naughty to touch that!" with no other object in view than to teach the child obedience and "to let things alone." A mother will tap a child's hand when the little fingers are laid upon a costly fan or vase. Now, what is she trying to convey? If she but knew it—merely an idea of an arbitrary distinction which it is impossible for him to comprehend. "This"—she tacitly observes—"costs money and if broken cannot be replaced. But that other thing over there is tough and valueless—play with that." The object having beautiful colors is forbidden probably, and a dull thing substituted. The child simply perceives that the most attractive object, the one that interests him is taken away; the *why* is beyond him. If we could once see into the workings of the little mind we would know that such trials are too hard, and they are premature. We do not subject our sons to the tempta-

tions of vice set forth in its most attractive forms, even when some degrees of judgment and self-control have been attained. And yet, while arbitrarily establishing the code that it is wicked to destroy even in the pursuit of knowledge, we place a baby in the midst of wonders and expect it to exercise the amazing fortitude of preferring to be good to following the strong instinct of nature, which is to touch, taste, and handle all unknown objects.

But the simplest law of equity demands that we make virtue possible to our children. Place no overwhelming temptations in their way and tenderly educate them into the faculty of self-denial before we make our mere command the impassable barrier to their chosen enjoyment. "Our 'yes,'" observes the author of an excellent old book, "should be hearty and unconditional; our promise the rock on which the child can find unshaken foundation for building its plans. Our 'no' should be a wall of brass which the child shall give up all hope or endeavor to shake." But what is to be thought of

the parent who inconsiderately erects this wall between his child and legitimate sources of gratification? Who debars him from some pastimes because of his own timidity, and from others because it is much less troublesome to have him remain quiet! There is a chapter in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* called "The Everlasting No," the reading of which produces profound sadness, as it vividly presents a feeling of all the negations of life. I have sometimes read on the pensive faces of little ones, travelling about the world under the surveillance of sour-looking guardians, a reflection of the dark shadow cast on their innocent young souls by this bleak wall of everlasting negation that puts its veto on all sorts of action merely because it is action, and dooms creatures born to attain to self-knowledge and knowledge of the world by the use of their faculties, to passivity.

"Stop, Sarah!" sharply cries the nurse to the baby who is throwing its head back against the cushions of its carriage, intent on getting exercise in this way. "Sit down and keep still," orders the

mother, annoyed and interrupted in an interesting conversation by her little tot's throwing a handful of pebbles or dandelions in her lap and asking her to help him play with them. "Come right along," shouts some person in charge of the child who stops short at an inconvenient moment to gaze in wonder and delight at a colony of ants on the sidewalk. And thus perpetually wherever they go they encounter this thoughtless opposition from people who have forgotten that they ever were children. This terrible lack of sympathy is what clouds so many young lives and converts buoyant dispositions into sullenness and obstinacy. A contented child is an obedient child. If he has been treated with systematic consideration, and the natural wants of his mind as well as those of his body attended to, he has no feeling of antagonism to his guardians. But the mental solicitations of children are strong. From the first they require to be taught. The unfolding of their faculties gives them conscious delight, and we ought from the beginning to address ourselves to their intelligence.

Present things to them in contrast by getting them to notice successively two objects widely different in some special properties, such as form and color. By the time he can walk a child should know the difference between soft and hard, elastic and brittle. What pleasure it gives a child to handle a thing which seems to possess a certain vitality; he likes to stretch a rubber-band back and forth and listen to its vibrations as he snaps it with his fingers. A certain old carpenter's "level" containing a drop of mercury revolving under its glass shield, furnished a whole fairyland of wonders to one fanciful little girl. They like something that responds, that encourages them to action. But they soon tire of aimless exertions. Monotony is a child's horror.

The parent who has a high ideal of his duties will make his care of his child a progressional education: joining what he has learned one day to new knowledge the day following. But this necessitates more information of human nature and physical nature than is usually possessed, for a child's first instinctive researches

lead him into the field of physics, chemistry and natural history. His earliest questions, diving straight to the foundation, baffle superficial minds. But it is mortifying that men and women who have passed through the schools and would resent the imputation of being ignorant of the fundamental principles, are not ashamed to confess that they are not prepared to guide their little ones along the preliminary steps of education. They could teach the child of seven to read and write, but they cannot teach the six months' old baby the use of his muscles by appropriate movements, nor help him to develop his sense perceptions by simple but scientific experiments ; and they have so far forgotten all they ever knew about natural history that it is impossible for them to satisfy inquiries about plants and stones and insects. Is it really ignorance, or is it indolence ? Whatever it is there is no excuse for it. I have observed that when people are impressed with a sense of the real importance and the necessity of a pursuit they find time and energy to engage in it. Something less

essential is given up. But where the interest is slight, even though the duty may be manifest, they find innumerable and quite satisfactory excuses for shirking. It is hardly to be expected that the ordinary parent will undertake the trouble of preparing himself for the great duty and privilege of developing in its natural order the mind of his child. But let him not grumble then at having fretful and rebellious children. He must either be benefactor or foe; there is no medium; unless, indeed, he conceals his indifference by keeping aloof, delegating his duties to others, and remains a stranger. He will thus avoid seeing all the consequences of his neglect.

But the parents who have in their souls enough of that freshness and enthusiasm happily preserved to those who believe that life is "worth the living" in its highest sense, will have supplied to them through sympathy and affection sufficient zeal to undertake the education of their child. Instead of merely amusing themselves by an hour's play they will give him a daily object lesson, training him to

observe and to reason, and furnishing him in this way with subject matter for thought while he feels himself merely entertained. The first moral lessons should be interesting, not mere barren iterations. Ingenuity should be employed and use made of that dramatic instinct and love of representation which every child possesses. Instead of scolding being administered for the very natural and common fault of dropping an object after he has finished with it, he can be taught that china and glass will break by the sacrifice of a few old pieces, and from the sorrow of the parent he will comprehend that breaking is to be avoided and such things handled carefully. It is not fair to give a child, during the first year of his life, a rubber doll that can be tossed about anywhere, and then expect him to hold a china cup or glass. Yet such absurd transitions are common in the thoughtless treatment children too often receive.

A certain amount of breaking is necessary for him to obtain a notion of solidity. He should no more be chided for it than we would chide the chemist

for shattering the glass tube to demonstrate an experiment. Destructiveness in young children only means great mental activity. The most careless persons are usually those who have been in youth continually repressed by over-careful parents. Dr. Edward Seguin gives it as his opinion that suffering develops contradiction. In his own words:

“Average men who oppose everything were compressed from birth in some kind of swaddling bands; those who abhor study were forced to it as a punishment; those who gormandize were starved; those who lie were brought to it by fear; those who hate labor were reduced to work for others; those who covet were deprived; everywhere oppression creates antagonism.”

If a parent will recall the experiences of a single day it is probable that he will find that most of the reprimands with which he has visited his child have been for faults against usages; faults which if left alone would in time amend themselves. The critical attitude is easy to assume, hard to relinquish, and by indulging

ourselves in it we come to dislike persons who jar against our nerves. Children suffer much through contact with such ultra-refined sensibilities. "We instruct them too much," remonstrates Rousseau. "We torture them and lose their love."

"The wall of brass," therefore, should be erected only before fields whose entrance is forbidden from just reasons. There come times when a child's safety may depend upon his habit of prompt obedience. This willing, cheerful concession cannot come if he has been made to perpetually yield to whims. It results from confidence that his parent has good reason for making the demand. "Ah," says the little heroine of the "Wide, wide world," contrasting the training of her brother with that of her other relatives: "but you always had a *reason*, and they have not."

"Obey first and I will tell you why afterward if you wish to know," remarks a wise parent, when giving a hard order. The kind explanation cements the bond of sympathy and makes the child more ready next time to give up his will,

since he realizes that he is under beneficent direction and not the subject of a tyrant. There are circumstances where the explanation should accompany the order, as in the denial of a cherished plan. It is unnecessary to cause even temporary heart-burnings. But as obedience should be a habit learned in infancy, it is in general, not judicious to defer it to explanations. Let them come afterwards, and as resulting from a pleasant, friendly intercourse between parent and child. Young people love these intimate talks, perhaps mixed with allegory and tales of what "happened when papa was a boy and mamma a girl," as much as they dread formal lecturing. Familiarity can be maintained without fear of disrespect.

The most beautiful relations exist where a mother is the comrade and chosen confidante of her children. They like to feel that she is human like themselves; and if fallible sometimes, so it is not in point of principle, it does not hurt her in their eyes. We have no right to pretend to be perfect to our children; only let them see that we are striving toward

perfection. They are keen observers, and there are times when every parent displays himself in an unlovely light. Rather than be false, let him acknowledge that he is not always able to conform to his own standard; but he regrets the lapse, just as every one must who tries to do right. Children are very tender with the faults of grown people, when the latter have not repelled and disgusted them by a harsh show of perfection. In our querulous moments it is as plain to them as to us that we are wrong. But how quickly the explanation of "a headache" or of being "worried" turns their vexation into sympathy. Would we were as forgiving and sweet toward their foibles as they are toward us.

In dealing with the problem of family government it is necessary to recollect that the tendency of our age is strongly toward liberty of the individual, and in no other country is the bias so determined as in our own. Coming down to us perhaps from the old Romans is that spirit which makes us remarkable for patriotic devotion to our country and for

absolute independence within the limits of our private life. But while for ages the evolution of personal independence was confined to the men, who, as heads of households, absorbed all other personalities into their own, this century has seen a striking revolution accomplished in the status of women, and proceeding concomitantly with this has come increased consideration for children, as separate individuals. Men are no longer, as formerly, lost in and sacrificed to the State, women are no longer merged in, and their identity covered by that of their husbands, and children are no longer lost in the family. One reason for this is that with the advance of higher civilization and the consequent diminishing frequency of those internicene wars which used to depopulate whole communities, the same necessity does not exist for having immense families. When nations are young quantity is of the first importance, but when there has been a considerable evolution of arts, sciences, and social refinements, quality becomes the object of consideration and

the preference grows up for devoting to a few, for the purpose of aiding them to reach a high degree of development, the care that, given to the many, would only be sufficient for them to attain to a lower degree of development.

The fewer children there are in a family the more, other things being equal, will each one receive separate consideration and become in himself an object of importance. Contrast the progeny of the Irish laborer or of the negro in one of the southern states, as in numbers they cluster about the door of his cabin, their faces and expression so wonderfully alike that except for the difference in their ages their own parents could scarcely tell them apart, with the three children, say, of some highly-educated professional man. In the former case they are a herd, all treated alike and no account taken of such natural mental or physical dissimilarities as do exist. But in the latter case each child is a distinct factor, with marked variations from the family type. Each has tastes, constitutional peculiarities, and abilities which single him out very early

as an object for some special sort of care and training, and draw attention to him as an individual.

Nature thus arranges, in her processes of selection, that the finer the quality of her specimen the more he shall stand apart, as an independent being. Another reason for the decrease in the size of families is that beside the necessity for more attention being given to each one, there is a great difference in the kind of attention required. In ancient times physical education was the primary essential. When life and property depended upon a man's strength muscle was the only power and received the most care. For many centuries mental cultivation was confined to the practically useless portion of the community, and was acquired by others merely as an accomplishment. But the demand of modern civilization is for brain, and that of a superior quality. When boys could once be sent out with a servant to pass whole days in learning to swim, to ride and to handle weapons, and the girls be set down to their sewing and em-

broidery, leaving their parents' minds free and at ease—their whole duty done—modern children must be studied and considered from the standpoint of their mental development: a matter requiring the exercise upon the part of their parents of all the intellectual and moral faculties they may possess. To rear a child possessing strongly original qualities is a vast wear and tear upon the nerves. But this is the penalty of high civilization. The Americans are the most original people that have ever existed; the most versatile, the most nervous. They possess the element of inherent stability that leads them to dominate weaker natures. It is done good-naturedly and unconsciously, for the most part.

It is a singular thing to observe the effects produced in even one generation, by the atmosphere of freedom and aspiration that exists in our country. The Irish mother, born and bred in the old country, comes here, and has a daughter who almost from the beginning manifests a strength of character far exceeding that of her parents. The traditions and ideas

brought from beyond the sea seem to have all the vigor taken out of them during their passage across the Atlantic. Children born on our free soil are Americans in very spirit, imbibing apparently from their surroundings and education that which nullifies their hereditary pre-disposition. If this may be said of these half-foreigners, how much more strongly it applies to the descendants of the early settlers of our country. There is little phlegm in our constitutions, and our babies show in their earliest movements a sense of individuality springing from generations of self-governing men.

The Germans are a nation of soldiers and philosophers. The one practice makes them submissive to discipline, and the other renders them cheerfully indifferent under hardships. Consequently the heritage of German children is obedience, and they are the most docile and easily governed of any. But their repressed powers of self-will have the most violent outbreaks in later years, just as our own Indians develop, from their cruel confinement in the board cradles,

the most ferocious activities of incessant war.

Repression causes more suffering to our children than it causes less nervous temperaments, and harshness brings about very grave mental disturbance. Decision is in all government a matter of first importance, but with a free-born race it is an object always to produce the maximum of good conduct with an exertion of the minimum of force. We must not keep our children infants, for our own pleasure, but let them grow as fast as they will. With each succeeding year our commands should be fewer, our restraints lighter. A child who has been well trained usually shows touching confidence in the judgment of his parents. He will bring to them his perplexities and disputes, and insist upon their saying whether he is to do certain things. The less arbitrary a parent is the more real power he possesses, for it is a power which penetrates beyond action into the spring of action, the heart.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EARLY INDICATIONS OF INDIVIDUALITY.

“Do not regret the exhibition of considerable self-will on the part of your children. It is the correlative of that diminished coerciveness so conspicuous in modern education. The greater tendency to assert freedom on the one side corresponds to the smaller tendency to tyrannize on the other. They both indicate an approach to the system of discipline we contend for, under which children will be more and more led to rule themselves by the experience of natural consequences; and they are both the accompaniments of our more advanced social state.—SPENCER.

THE rapid growth of a child's personality after he has left infancy behind, is a constant surprise to his parents. Yesterday he seemed passive and dumb; to-day he bursts forth into expression and tells us of ideas and opinions that startle us by their boldness. At first everything he says is not only treated with indulgence, but the freshness and

originality of his fancies give a great deal of pleasure to his elders. His extravaganzas are repeated and laughed at. The child is the real wit as he is the real poet: there is sure to be a pungency in his observations which comes from their directness and fearless truth. Before his book education has begun, and while he yet observes everything for himself and at first hand, he has that delicate sense of real value which only unsophisticated natures possess, and which is lost so soon as artificial views corrupt the mind and rob it of that pure insight which teaches that truth is always right.

The child goes straight to the point and his directness refreshes the jaded energies of his mature companions. They question him and draw him out, but it is only to toy with him. All the wealth of suggestion and speculation constitute merely "bright sayings." They do not appreciate that he is desperately in earnest about everything, that life is commencing to take on a serious aspect, and the baby has developed into the responsible human being. His little airs of assertion seem

amusing, and aware that he has no real power—that he is a dependent and a subject—we divert ourselves by allowing him to strut around with his fancied assumption of manhood, just as we cheer the little one who seizes hat and cane and insists that he is “papa.”

Most persons see in all this only something grotesque. There is required the penetrating eye of affectionate interest to dive down to the bottom of their hearts and see there the struggling self-respect of the growing creature, beginning to realize that he has a mind of his own, that he can observe, understand and reason without aid. “*I know,*” he remarks, with the quick instinct of dignity, when a too elaborate explanation is forced upon him. “*I can understand for myself.*” And following naturally upon this comes the desire to act for himself. He wants to be “let alone,” and if crossed is apt to say so. There is a stir of real ambition, a desire for freedom, which makes his breast swell and his heart beat impatiently against his fetters. It is now that he is galled by the sense of constant oversight,

that he does not like to feel himself an object of solicitude. Petting is obnoxious, because it is a reminder of babyhood. Mothers are often much hurt at the rebuffs of their tenderness about this time. Particularly where there are only two children at most in the family, in which case they are kept infants because parents cannot bear to lose their babies. This is a very common sentiment and held to be meritorious. "I want to keep my child a baby as long as I can," a mother declares, looking with aversion upon the parent who permits to his child the freedom essential to his healthy growth. But this is not affection, it is sentimentality, and grounded upon the real dogmatic, egotistical instinct. He must have a narrow mind and a feeble conception of his duties who thinks that the only way to preserve children's innocence is to keep them in a state of profound ignorance concerning life. They have a right to comprehend that which concerns them while it can be taught from the right standpoint. The "knowledge of good and evil" is a defense or a snare, according to

the way in which it is imparted. And the time for putting this power in our children's own hands is when they manifest the first signs of being ready for it.

Guarding them still without effusive display, from contact with evil, we ought, as the age of reason arrives, to acquaint them with those profound truths the understanding of which brings a heavy but inevitable responsibility. What right have we to retard the moral and mental growth of our children, any more than to prevent their physical growth? "My guardian is so tyrannical," laments some hero of a juvenile tale, "that if he had taken a notion that I ought to be tall he would have hung me up to the ceiling with weights to my heels!" Equally tyrannical is the attempt to suppress the evidence of those early feeble efforts of the young soul to enter upon its rightful relations with the universe. Instead of being ridiculed they should be treated with profound respect. We ought to let our children grow up as fast as they will, and rather rejoice than lament over signs of advancing maturity.

One of the early indications of the sense of personality in the child is his desire for privacy. Now he withdraws himself slightly from the family, and has little secrets and makes little plans. If he has a propensity for scribbling he keeps journals which with characteristic confidingness he leaves about the house. It outrages his sense of propriety when some one reads his papers, and why should it not? The child's possessions ought always to be inviolate. He learns a sense of property through possessing toys of his own. There is no greater wrong than forcibly taking away something that belongs to him and giving it away to some one else. Many good parents commit this robbery to teach the child to be unselfish! It rather sets him the example of stealing. And just as we respect his rights to his toys we ought to respect his rights to his ideas, and permit him liberty of thought. Cannot some one recollect some incident in his own past life when his face was made to burn and his heart to beat almost to suffocation, by having some inconsiderate grown person

haul up to the light a little secret he had fondly cherished and taken pride in as his very own ?

They are innocent, for the most part. A few pages of a wildly imaginative romance, the beginnings of an ambitious invention which is to revolutionize industries ; perhaps a note-book of signs for a new language, which is something particularly attractive to a certain class of bright children. They like to establish secret societies, and get up ciphers as a means of private communication. Their projects, while founded generally upon the institutions that surround them, have a certain air of the unique, because while still imitative, they are no longer slavishly so, preferring to do things in their own way. But constant experimenting brings constant surprises and disappointments. The seething, bubbling spirit of restlessness leads to rash enterprises and the little hero finds himself wound up in the coil spun by his own originality. But in this way he learns the use of his powers. All the experience he gets in childhood is so much capital for maturity. What he

suffers now in a small way he may be saved from suffering some day in a larger way. Happy are those children who are allowed to mingle freely with each other and make a miniature community for themselves, planning, acting, making their own rules and regulating each other's conduct according to their own ideas of justice. All this is play, but it has far-reaching consequences in its effects upon character. Only those who have been accustomed early to freedom can rightly use it, and those who have been obliged to weigh and balance questions and make decisions gain accuracy and steadiness of judgment, and are far less liable to unfortunate mistakes than persons who have been always over-restrained and over-advised.

We make unnecessarily hard this period of life which is in itself the most trying time in all our existence. The transition period between the docility of infancy and the independence of youth is peculiarly uncomfortable both to the parents and the child himself. He now really knows nothing while aspiring to know everything. He is swayed by contradictory

impulses and perplexed by the ever-changing relations matters present to his limited reasoning powers. At one time he is loud in his confident assertions, at the next, rebuffed and discouraged, he withdraws into the depths of his own consciousness and is inclined to be skeptical of everything.

Corresponding to this mental state of the child is the condition of the parents. They see with surprise and concern a weakening of their authority, and are accused of rigor while exercising their natural prerogative of government. But let them consider. Vicarious government —the rule of one individual over another, is, in the economy of nature, a temporary makeshift, to be pursued only until such time as the weaker party shall have gained self-possession enough to manage his own affairs. In infancy government is absolute because the young creature is absolutely helpless. Day by day the helplessness diminishes, and so, too, should the coercion lessen day by day. When the baby can creep alone, shorten his frocks and give him the freedom of the floor;

when he can run let him go at will. It is only our artificial civilization which necessitates artificial restraints, and bearing in mind that they are unnatural, they should be made as few as possible. Stairs in houses suggest protective lattices to keep the baby from precipitating himself from top to bottom, and the presence of mirrors and ornaments make it advisable to keep out of the way anything capable of being used as a missile. Now, we mix up everywhere, the ideas of government which is protective of the child and that which is protective of our own privileges and property, until often the real aim of government is lost in thoughtless every-day usages. Through subjecting his conduct to surveillance for the sake of our own pleasure and profit we fall into the habit of extending this restraint far beyond its natural limits of age.

As fast as a child grows wise enough to substitute self-rule for the restrictions imposed by others he earns independence and takes his place in the world as a factor. Our training should be progressive, so that the truth learned one day may be the

starting point for higher knowledge afterwards. Dogmatical prohibitions avail nothing but to put a stop to specific acts, but teaching a child to reason out the use and beauty of right conduct means putting in his hands the torch-light of virtue which will light the dark paths he must traverse in future. It is *principles* which sink deeply into the mind and are long remembered. The moral lesson conveyed by the apt and happy illustration of a wide, all-embracing truth in a manner revolutionizes thought and influences all opinions that are touched by it. Children can be taught much through the reading of history and biography, and, even undirected, they acquire through these studies, many predispositions and views that become unalterable.

Our primary duty is to encourage our children to think for themselves. Throw upon them, as soon as they are capable of understanding it, the responsibility of choice. No fear but that they will learn far more and with less evil consequences, than if we kept them in leading strings. Reproaches should never be multiplied.

Let them bear their own fruit. When love and wisdom have dictated our words we may safely trust to time to develop all the potency of their influence. If to-day we correct our child for stoning a cat, to-morrow he refrains in obedience to our wishes ; but next year, having observed the evil effects of cruelty to animals, he determines of his own accord to treat his dog and pony with peculiar gentleness, because sympathy and reason have been at work in his mind and he has evolved for himself a permanent rule of conduct. And he has gained so much poise and independence, and needs so much the less guidance and restraint.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### GROWTH IN SELF-GOVERNMENT.

“The control of parents over children is based solely upon the parents’ duty to educate them. This duty of education is established by nature and guaranteed by the state. To consider the children as property of the parents is absurd. When the education ceases the child becomes free. Parents should constantly increase the freedom of the child during its education.”

—FICHTE.

THE more highly specialized the individual the more general and less stringent becomes the external government. Authority is supposed to act as a kind of conscience for ignorant minds, and its reason for being is only in the incapacity of the person so ruled. The life of an individual must be looked upon as a continuous adjustment of his physical and mental powers to his environment. When he first comes into the world he is, as it were, fast-bound, all his faculties

imprisoned, all activities prevented by the officers of order who represent its interests. Little by little, the powers of perception and understanding grow within him, and little by little the iron bonds of restraint are loosed, until with maturity of mind the last link slips away and he stands fully evolved, a free man with only his conscience for his king.

The entire education of a child from birth should have in view this assumption of self-government. Just as we permit him to use his muscles as he acquires control of them we should respect his growing mental powers and resign our authority in each instance when he shows that he has attained judgment enough to decide any question of conduct correctly. It is not unusual for parents, too careless to acquaint themselves with even the most ordinary facts relating to growth, to keep their children physically helpless. A baby will be fed, if he has a nurse, to prevent his soiling his clothes or the table-cloth. He will be kept in his carriage to "keep him out of mischief," and in fact, allowed to do nothing for himself lest he

should do it wrong. "He can't do it—wait till he knows how," are the objections made. Is this rational? How is he to learn how except through doing it wrong many times over? If some of the officious kindnesses people lavish on children were probed for motives, it would be found often that they so act to save themselves trouble. Indeed, there is not infrequently some frank avowal of this sort. "It is a great deal easier to do it myself than to teach John or Dolly the right way," confesses some mother, while dispensing with proffered help. Easier, no doubt, but a wrong to the child, nevertheless. There are little ones of two years whose muscles are so weak from lack of exercise that they totter uncertainly on their feet, and cannot hold a fork or spoon with any precision in their baby fingers. Because their uncertain motions make it disagreeable to be near them they are not allowed to handle things. This is keeping a child a slave to our convenience and comfort. Strength of muscle, nicety of touch, only come with free exercise. And the same rule is

applicable to mental development and to conduct. We should recollect this when we are inclined to interfere and decide questions the deciding which for themselves would be valuable as an education.

Of all the multitude of things we have been taught during our lives how much do we recollect? Inquiry would reveal the fact that the information which has obtained a permanent hold upon our minds is that which has been related to action. Particularly, to independent and chosen action. It is the duty of a parent to let a child crystallize his impressions into knowledge: let him act out his beliefs and find whether they are worth anything. Make judges and jurymen of the tots in the nursery, and do not laugh when they screw their innocent faces into an expression of droll gravity and seem to have the weight of an awful responsibility upon their shoulders. There is the greatest difference between children in the growth of capacity for self-control. Some spring boldly along, making mistakes without losing their self-confidence, keeping up their courage and hope and gaining ground

with every experience. While others remain timid and vacillating beyond the age of adolescence, and seem to shrink from the responsibility of making decisions. Dispositions of this sort ought to be imbued with courage, not injudiciously shielded. When it is a native tendency every pains should be taken to arouse ambition and ardor, else the timid child will grow up into the weak, incapable adult, selected apparently for every species of "bad luck" incapables fall heir to. How unhappy are such natures when they are confronted, as they inevitably will be, sooner or later, with a crisis requiring prompt and decided action, and where weal or woe will depend entirely upon their ability to make a wise judgment.

It will appear that the habit some parents have of praising and encouraging a tendency toward moral laziness must have the effect of weakening that fiber which can only reach its proper strength by measuring itself against difficulties. Self-willed and energetic parents, and particularly those in whom vanity is great,

ordinarily manifest an overwhelming fondness for the offspring whose weakness offers least opposition to their rule. And they will deduce the most singularly shortsighted and illogical arguments to defend a method of training which is based altogether upon the long-exploded fallacy that parental authority is a divine right, to be exercised without restriction or reason. Such a parent remarked to the author with a fierce emphasis sufficiently indicating the all-pervading egotism of which she was the hopeless and unconscious subject: "I don't want my daughters to *budge* without consulting me." And as a matter of fact her growing girls were utterly helpless in all the minor affairs of life in knowledge of which a child of ten should have graduated. They could not so much as change a gown or alter the disposition of a piece of furniture without leave. The mother, a singular compound of ignorance, vanity, aggressive conscientiousness, and tyrannical self-assertion, completely dominated every feeble sign of individuality as it peeped forth, and covered with her spreading maternal

wings these fledglings whom she so persistently prevented from achieving their natural independence.

It is not in intellectual jails that human beings gain self-knowledge and the ability to formulate definite purposes. This ability constitutes the great distinction between workers and idlers; between the persons destined to add something to the world's wealth and those whose career is that of the leech, the dependent, docile enough, perhaps provokingly humble and meek, but a drag upon the wheels of progress, and a torment to those active organisms of which they become the satellites. Not in homes where the straps that hold baby to his crib and chair become, as he grows older, cables to anchor his intelligence to the parental fiat, and to bind his free choice by the thongs of traditional influences, not in such an environment flourishes the bright, brave, enterprising character which is the average type of our age and country. But in that atmosphere most favorable to its healthy unfolding, where parents are capable of taking in the conception of a

broad humanity, and recognizing that the tie between themselves and their children is only part of that more general and not less stringent relation existing between their children and society,—will all that is strong and beautiful take root in young souls and expand into symmetrical maturity. Here the baby shows, as he handles his belongings and responds to the overtures of his elder playmates, that self-possession which surprises thoughtless on-lookers. Here the toddling mites, just learning to walk and talk, are self-helpful, a comfort to nurses and parents. And here, at the age of eight or ten, they manifest such good-sense that they may be safely trusted to take care of themselves in minor matters, and by the time they are twelve or fourteen authority is an obsolete quantity, and influence alone can be depended upon to aid them in such affairs as are yet beyond their range of experience and reason.

Some women are possessed of that unhappy disposition which has an absolute distrust of the competency of any creature other than themselves. A woman

of this kind, grumbling and groaning under self-imposed burdens, will compel every one about her to sit still and be waited upon. She officially puts to rights belongings their owners have left temporarily in disorder, watches every chance to embarrass people by unwished-for assistance and makes herself trouble most unnecessarily, yet which it seems ungrateful not to thank her for. In a household of children such a well-meaning person may become a haunting terror. She follows up their footsteps and over-sees every trivial act. A heavy sense of responsibility concerning the acts of others, possessed by one determined inmate, may contrive to dull the moral sensibilities of an entire family. No one likes to be rendered passive and be laid under an obligation of gratitude for the deprivation of their normal independence! Grown persons resent it. Children writhe under it.

“Let us go off by ourselves,” they may well pray. “Let us cease to be things, and be human beings,” they might plead, if they were able to interpret and express

their own feelings. The cognition of objects as they exist when we first see them gives us those definite impressions which need to be voluntarily combined and arranged before there comes any knowledge available for everyday use. This power to combine and compare is the most valuable faculty of the mind. It is essential that it be exercised unrestrainedly ; by each person for himself. If the exercise is by the manipulating of objects we call it experimenting, and if only dealing with ideas, reasoning. Experimenting comes first in the natural order of development. The child handles everything and must put objects in actual position before he can comprehend their relative uses and properties. Now, just as he gains definite knowledge of the laws of matter by being left free to manage matter, so, he gains power to reason by being thrown upon his own mental resources and obliged to put his vague ideas to the test of practice. Of the two ways of gaining knowledge : being told, and finding out, the latter is incalculably the better. It is impossible to make an impression upon the mind of

another unless we address his personal feelings and his intelligence. We cannot manipulate another person's mental machinery to his own advantage, we can only suggest a course or an idea, and let nature do the rest.

Parents should make it their constant aim to educate the judgment of their children, so that from year to year they may become more and more capable of perceiving the true relations of things and able to extricate truth from its overlying mass of fabrication and fancy. In early life the imagination is so active that it presents vivid pictures liable to be confused with actualities. Little children, like savages, think that shadows have independent existence. The image in the water, the projection on the wall furnish to their excited fancy living images which make their dreams seem real, and the vague suggestions made by the floating clouds, the flying white papers on a lonely road, and the dusky drapery over a chair-back, round themselves out into complete pictures which at once allure and terrify. There is a period in the life of a fanciful

child when it is well-nigh impossible for him to give an accurate description of an occurrence. He believes that that really happened which he only apprehended or conceived ought to happen. Dreams frequently confuse him and pursue him far into the day. If much alone he is apt, too, to fall into a habit of day-dreaming, so that while walking about with every outward semblance of ordinary activity, he may be the mere mechanical agent of habits pursued while his mind is totally withdrawn into a mysterious, unreal realm. This leads to "mind-wandering," "absent-mindedness," etc., and breaks up the power of fixed attention to immediate duties. But when the habit has become confirmed it is not judicious to break it up suddenly and harshly. The effects of any forcible interruption of the mental processes may be dangerous. Physical activity and liberty of action are the remedies. Little slaves dream much. And wherever children have been suppressed and the natural unfolding of their reasoning powers aborted we may expect displays of inconsistency, irrational-

ality, and, in after life, weakness and irresolution where there ought to be firmness. What is the most obvious failing of the ordinary man or woman? Poor judgment. Inability to weigh the value of testimony and form conclusions based upon a just consideration of all the data at hand. Hamilton observes that it is suicidal to distrust the evidence of our faculties. But evidence depends upon the normal condition of perception. Perceptiveness may be blunted and dulled in early life so as to be too sluggish and unsound to transmit correct impressions. Or, even the bright, active mind, alive to details, may have relapsed into a mere registrar of isolated facts, through denial of liberty to compare and generalize. Of all the things people suppose themselves to be familiar with, the most important one receives the least attention. Human nature is the great book of which all other sciences and arts are mere volumes. To understand the laws of life is to be furnished with the key to unlock the door in the palace of destiny. How little we know of one another, how incorrectly we

read the outward signs of those emotions that are stirring the hearts of our friends and enemies and that will re-act most powerfully in another moment either against us or in our favor.

To be able to read character is to be wise against the day of ill to come, and to be possessed of power to help and defend the weak and ignorant against the unfortunate consequences of their own follies. But the student of character, the man or woman possessed of insight to detect and ability to turn to account the impulses to action, must be a good reasoner as well as a keen observer. Neither predispositions nor prejudices must blind him, but the cool logic of an imperturbable self-control must accompany and dominate both his sympathies and his wishes. The scientific study of human nature is being more attended to in the present age, and it must be the chief and choice pursuit of the more cultured future. And while to this pursuit must be brought the fullest measure of enlightenment and vigor of which the mind is capable, it is only through the cultivation of our highest

faculties and their exercise in early life upon common subjects that we shall ever be able to attain to this consummation of power.

Says Faraday, in a lecture delivered before the Royal Institution of Great Britain :

“ Claiming, then, the use of the ordinary faculties of the mind in ordinary things, let me next endeavor to point out what appears to me to be a great deficiency in the exercise of the mental powers in every direction. Three words will express this want—*deficiency of judgment*. I do not wish to make any startling assertions, but I know that in physical matters multitudes are ready to draw conclusions who have little or no power of judgment in the case; that the same is true in other departments of knowledge; and that, generally, mankind is willing to leave the faculties which relate to the judgment almost entirely uneducated and their decisions at the mercy of ignorance, prepossessions, the passions, or even accident.”

Are not parents responsible in great

part for a defect so wide-spread and glaring? Does not the suppression of curiosity, the contempt bestowed upon early attempts to reason, and the prolonged exercise of an arbitrary government dull the faculties of youth and prevent the development of the highest and most important one of them—the judgment?

In their anxiety, often in their tender solicitude, parents forget that they and their offspring are separable units, that the time must arrive, as with the polyp, when the young will detach itself from the parent stem and go floating away on the ocean of life to thrive or perish on its own merits. Mere commands, directions to avoid this danger, to embrace that opportunity, will never hold against an adverse inclination in the youth old enough to judge for himself. How will it be with him, then, if he breaks away from authority with a heart seething with suppressed impulses, a will weak through lack of exercise, a judgment totally uneducated and incapable of independent exertion?

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE EVOLUTION OF PERSONAL CONSCIENCE.

“True progress requires study of the wisdom of the race to develop the humanities; and counter movement of study of science, which develops individuality.”—DOVE.

THE function of parental government is to protect the child and prepare it for independent life. This view of parental duty which it has been the object of the author to keep constantly in sight throughout the foregoing chapters involves the admission that there is in every child an inalienable right of choice for a certain kind of conduct over another kind. Evolution of character proceeds along both a general and a special path, the general path harmonizing with the average tendencies of the species, of the family, and of the period; but the special path leading to those de-

viations and eccentricities which mark out the organism as something existing by itself, unlike anything else, and ruled by a mental bias seemingly self-created, so far does it carry him away from the regulation pattern conceived as proper to his antecedents and surroundings.

It must be apparent that authority can only have jurisdiction over the general, not the special, tendency of the individual. It exists for the purpose of bringing him into those relations with society occupied by an average man, for the purpose of giving him that degree of enlightenment concerning laws and customs which shall make self-control expedient and criminality avoidable. He must be taught what it is essential to do and what not to do in order to maintain his own personal freedom and seek his own happiness, consistently with respecting the right to freedom and happiness possessed by all other members of the community. The moral law, as accepted from the ancient statutes called the "Ten Commandments," by all civilized nations, and made the basis of civil government, should be expounded

and the same degree of obedience to them enforced that will be enforced by legal authority when he enters the world. This obligation is one that will be binding upon him through life and that is susceptible to no change or mitigation. It is therefore, permanent; not the outcome of caprice, chance, nor the preference of his advisers. An anchor, ever at hand to keep his restless barque safe in port, is that firm conviction, which, implanted early in life, stays to the end; that justice is the undying universal moral principle which no one can controvert without self-destruction.

So, to *general relations*, as being the only permanent ones, should be directed the efforts of the guardians of the young. Is this done? Must it not be admitted that the most of our teaching, of our admonitions, are devoted to those special relations, comparatively transitory, and that special conduct, comparatively unimportant because dictated by occasions not likely to last, which concerns not parents, teachers, nor the community, but the individual himself, and over which, conse-

quently, he should be permitted personal control?

If this is so, it affords an explanation why, in the training of the young, confusion, trouble, and discouragement are the rule, not the exception. If, instead of employing our authority in the way nature intended it to be employed, we distort it to unnatural uses, how can any other result ensue than despair to the parent and injury to the child? Commonly, the entrance into life is the beginning of a warfare with those whose duty is protection, not aggression. Misconceiving their responsibilities, they make moral education consist almost wholly in the teaching of those minor subjects which concern themselves, and leave out those all-embracing ethical principles which concern humanity. Nearly all the instruction a child receives is in regard to those little acts which, from hour to hour, affect the convenience of his family. And particularly is there strict surveillance exercised over the least of his doings which differ in any respect from the ordinary conduct of his associates. The very unlikeness which constitutes his

personality is held to be an offense. He is chided for proclivities which are odd, for habits which are the outcome of his original impulses. Originality is in fact the point of contention between his guardians and him ; and yet with his originality they have nothing to do. That is a matter out of their province. And whatever efforts they make will be attended with but little success, for nature takes care not to be wholly thwarted, and confers sufficient impetus with every trait to enable the possessor to struggle for its preservation.

But the struggle may be embittering, as it certainly is unwise and unnecessary. The harmonious relations natural between parent and child may be converted into hostility wearing upon both, through the attempt to accomplish the impossible. Suppose that the lower species were imbued with the obstinate disposition to oppose in their offspring all tendencies to variations? What mad combats would take place, how progress would have been impeded ! But man alone, of all the animals, makes the rearing of his young

a training in all those temporary and conventional customs that are the accompaniment of his caprices, instead of an education of those faculties essential to his existence as a being, and a mere guidance in that matter of individual preference which concerns his personal development.

And man alone makes a failure of governing his offspring. For the reason that his government is an interference with nature. He can, therefore, only make it a success by returning to natural methods. In a few words these may be thus indicated. In great and permanent matters, restraint; in little and transient matters, liberty. In all cases, restraint only during the period of ignorance and irresponsibility, and a removal of it when reason has been attained.

The doctrine here advocated, of permitting children all possible freedom of action, and letting them suffer the natural consequences of their actions, has, as its direct aim, the development of their reasoning powers. Every experiment a child makes, every result traced to its

cause, gives keener insight and adds certainty to future researches for truth. If, in the physical world, he learns accurate use of his senses, how to detect flaws and trace the reason of his failures, he will carry into the sphere of morals an enhanced respect for vital truths and a tendency to keen observation of conduct. But above all this, he will be able to apprehend the vital springs of human nature. He will see how impulse betrays to error and that principles rule the moral as well as the physical universe. Thus trained he realizes early the use and abuse of government. Accustomed to look for causes he will not readily be blinded by mere displays of power, and will be on guard against all those dazzling shams the world flashes before credulous eyes.

But I pause here to say earnestly, that an education which develops the practical and logical side of nature should not suppress nor handicap the taste for the beautiful, the imaginative, the romantic. The Gradgrind who would eliminate from the realm of childhood the flowers of fancy, the grace and sweetness of sentiment, brings

grim, ghastly death to the fairest side of human nature. "Youth," said Aristotle "prefers beautiful to profitable conduct." Let it cherish its fairy dreams as relaxations from the work of living; for living is sometimes work to the young as well as to the old. But as art and science are at once both beautiful and practical, the education of the sense-perceptions, while conferring accuracy and judgment, permit, also, free play to the imagination. It is not dealing with natural facts which dwarfs the mind, but dealing with unnatural facts; with the sordid side of life, the mercenary, the grasping side. Who is more practical than the school-boy, of the type of Aldrich, Eggleston, and Holland, as they are represented by pen pictures scratched down when they were at play by the mill, the river, the school-ground? How wide-awake, how intolerant of humbug, and yet how fanciful, how tenacious of childish ideas and romantic whims! While encouraging the practical we must not discourage the ideal, for the two threads run along side by side, interweaving in the warp and woof of a

symmetrical character. And out of sentiment often comes useful action ; useful, because noble and heroic.

Youth worships heroes, and so learns to emulate. Love of liberty, of fair play, of equal rights springs up in the heart from contemplation of the events of history, as well as from the experiences of everyday life. In perceiving that acts which produce misery to others are bad and that to confer happiness is to be virtuous, a boy feels the emotions of sympathy with the oppressed, and disgust of tyranny. Presently he begins to understand how the curbing of wild and inconsiderate impulses in himself, and the cherishing sentiments impelling to right conduct has been the aim of parental government, and when conscience has so far developed that the wish is strong in him to do right, he has become an emancipated, self-governing being whose personality must henceforth be respected.

No such puerile sentiment as a wish to keep power in his own hands should impel a parent at this period to substitute restraints of his own for the natural

restraint consisting in the good intentions of the lad himself. He should be trusted to look after himself as far as may be. Rousseau, who has in most other respects good sense, falls into the error natural to a Frenchman, in advocating the encouragement of timidity, and a servile dependence upon tutors. The broader policy of modern educators places children upon their honor, rendering them self-respecting from the first. The educational institutions of Switzerland are among the best in the world, and here liberty is exercised in its purest form. In Dr. Fellenburg's model school social life was depended upon as the great aid in training. The boys were encouraged to become critics of one another, but in the spirit of generosity and justice, not with malice. It is wise to make, thus early, public opinion the instrument of restraint, since that will be the chief restraining force in later life.

Herein we see the advantage of children being surrounded from infancy by refined, high-minded companions, and not entrusted to ignorant servants. The evolu-

tion of the personal conscience is the end of moral education. And the quality of the conscience depends upon the average virtue of the community in which our lot is cast. Almost with mathematical certainty we might predict that a child's inclination toward virtue will not be greater than the sum of the power for good in his educators—heredity being taken into account also as against their aggregate power for evil. The presence of an adviser with loose views may be offset by the magnetism of one strong in uncompromising rectitude; but here the child would be exposed to a cross-fire which would bring about constant fluctuations. It would be difficult to say what would be the result of the settling down.

Generally, we are influenced by our equals more than by superiors or those we deem inferior, because the equality of position leads to the habit of looking at things from the same point of view, and affords a chance for congeniality. Children are, consequently, apt to defer to the opinions of each other, and they find it

harder to go against this fiat of social life than to act contrary to the admonition of an elder who seems, in a way, far off, and not intimately associated. They learn through pain and disappointment the fallacy of their youthful oracles, and acquire by this means, and through the enjoyments arising from happily chosen conduct, judgment in affairs of life and behavior.

We cannot spare our children the suffering consequent upon the development of their moral nature. It is an experience every soul must go through for itself. Gradually, silently, parents must withdraw from active interference, and let the child face circumstances and accept the consequences. As a veil hung before tender eyes and lifted little by little to admit the full light of day that screen made by parental solicitude must slide back. By the time the child has reached his "teens" and those emotions begin to work within him which are to revolutionize his nature and position, he should possess an equipment of self-knowledge and self-control that renders outside inter-

ference superfluous. Such indirect influence as can be exerted by placing in his way books likely to take pleasant hold of his imagination, and the permitting unrestricted intercourse with persons of excellent character, and above all, the making his home pleasant and attractive, will be almost the sole methods of help we shall be able now to afford. Government is over; the rest is purely a matter of influence. Made the intelligent agent of his own destiny from his earliest years, he knows his faults and weaknesses and comprehends the uses of discipline.

Julian Hawthorne, in his novel "Garth" depicts in his powerful and graphic style, the struggle of a rugged, strong-willed boy with his turbulent nature. He takes himself in hand at the age of twelve and assures his gentle, philosophical father that when there is a necessity for punishment he will inflict it himself. And what no external force could have effected he does succeed in accomplishing, until, after much sorrow, he arrives at maturity a strong, self-controlled man.

Early discipline in self-control is the

surest preparation for success in life. Why should we not get our first lessons while the cost will be comparatively light, and there is shelter and comfort near by, to sustain our drooping spirits? We can then go forth equipped against similar accidents, possessed of knowledge that is a bulwark. Pre-eminent above others is the person possessed of "good sense," the faculty of seeing clearly and judging impartially. And it is notable that persons so distinguished have usually been thrown early upon their own resources and forced to think for themselves. Who makes cake and forgets the flour, who has perpetual trouble with servants, and finds every responsibility a burden too heavy to be borne? Who, but the girl who was denied access to the kitchen and forbidden to meddle with the store-room, she whose capable mother kept her a pet and wished her "not to learn such work and then she would never have to do it." What man is pusillanimous and unfortunate in all his undertakings? Usually, the one who was kept close to the hearth in his boyhood and never suffered to

stray out of sight for fear of his coming to harm.

In one of the best governed families I ever knew, the three boys, ranging in age from seven to eleven, were allowed an amount of liberty that sometimes occasioned wondering comment from friends. To all intents and purposes they were as free as birds, and yet I recall no instance of their abusing their privileges. On the contrary, they seemed united to their parents by an unusually strong bond of affection. The larger lads hung fondly about their mother's chair and the little man of seven seemed to feel a deep sense of his responsibility in taking care of her and of his younger sister.

This care-taking is a great pleasure to a manly lad, and should be permitted early. Let him carry the satchel, buy the car-tickets, select the shady seats. Let the girl of a dozen years feel that she has a great deal to do in making the comfort of the family ; that upon her thoughtfulness depends largely the pleasure of others. Let her learn the value of money, how to buy, and the limitations

of an income. It is a very sensible custom to give young people an allowance and let them purchase their own clothing and belongings, at first under direction, afterward alone. Extravagance comes from ignorance, as parsimony from fear, and even an hereditary disposition to either trait may be largely overcome by wise management.

Without casting upon their young shoulders too heavy a burden of care, I think children should understand, when they show themselves reasonable enough, the worldly position of their parents. Is it necessary to show them the sordid side? It is to be hoped not. But show them, at least, the practical side. Let them become helpers, even counselors. "Family counsels" are something more than a name, and they establish that mutual confidence which is the safeguard of the young, the comfort of their elder friends. The time comes when the spontaneity, the demonstrativeness of childhood is replaced by a reticence and dignity hard for the affectionate parent to bear. But if there remains confidence, he can comfort him-

self. The young creature just learning his responsibilities will return ere long to pour his troubles and hopes into that patient ear. It is a physiological truth that the young are often most cold-hearted and selfish just before reaching manhood and womanhood, as the coldest hours are before sunrise.

There are inevitable pangs for parents in seeing their children grow away from them. But after all, these are selfish sufferings. We do not sufficiently realize that we are training our children not for ourselves but for the world, for their country, and above all, for *life*. This modern period in which our destiny is cast is one fraught with strange interest and importance to the future. It is the age of science, of knowledge, of experiment, of action, of individuality. The children of this generation have peculiar need of such early discipline as shall fit them to deal with the most intricate problems of morality. Empiricism is passing away, and men are confronted personally with all those questions that were settled for their fathers by the vox Dei. The exigencies

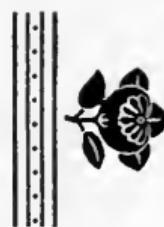
of modern life demand self-poise, an independent mental attitude, as well as senses trained to the nicest discrimination. The timid and vacillating will be overborne by those possessing readiness and determination to set truth above conventionalities and work for the establishment of that order of things which shall give the greatest happiness to the greatest number.

Let us recollect that the boys and girls about our hearths are the future law-givers of the world. They may have certain qualities which make them uncomfortable to deal with now; the very force and self-confidence valuable in the future citizen renders them intractable and restless under repressive government. We must meet such restlessness by enlarged opportunities for action, and permit to the growing man and woman freedom to exercise and develop faculties of which, when maturity is reached, they will stand most in need.

THE END.

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